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8 March '96

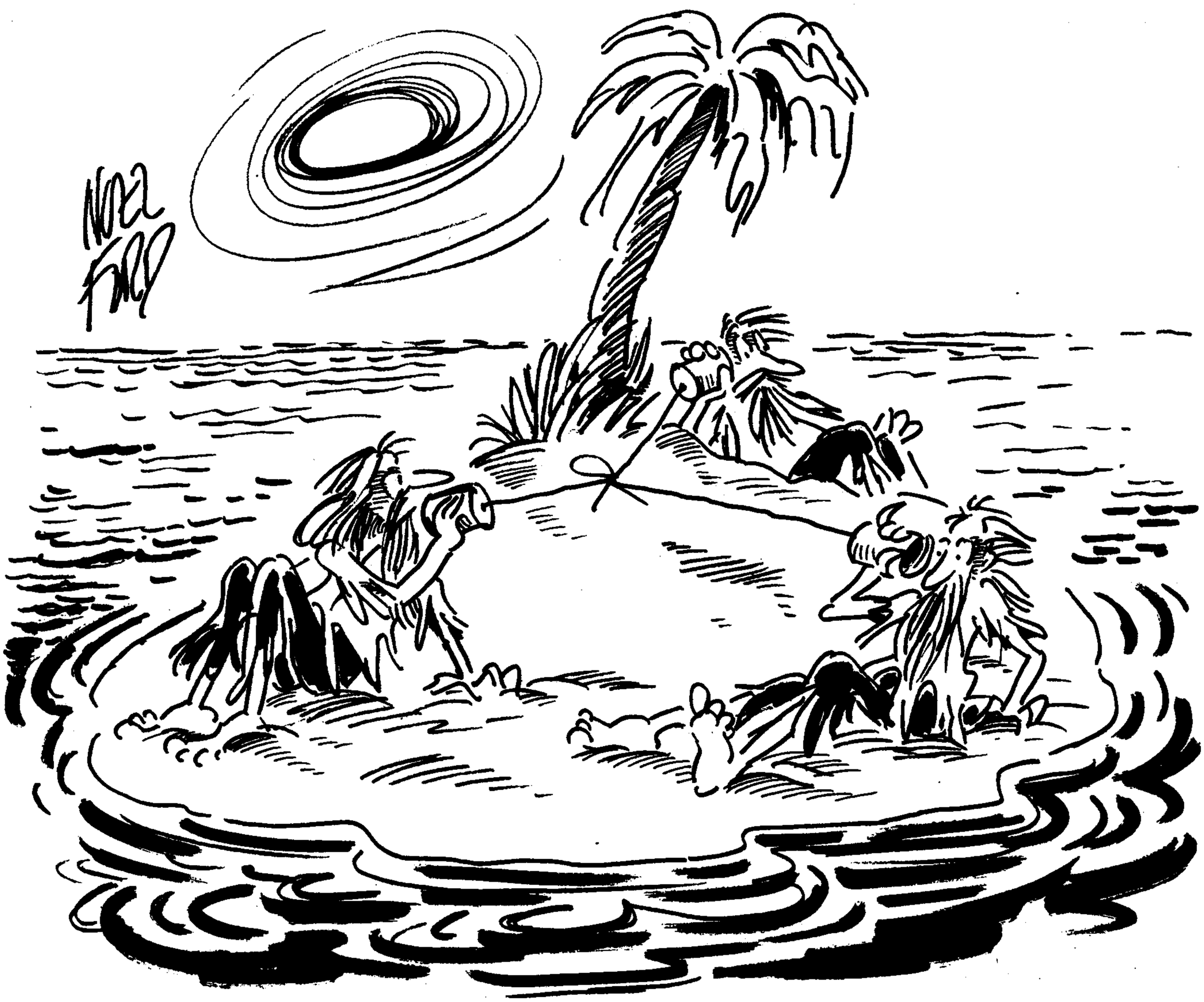
PRIVATE EYE

£1

WALES' DISASTER

DIVORCE SPECIAL ISSUE

GUARANTEED TO FALL APART AFTER TWO YEARS



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Gnome

IT is perfectly clear that people of a certain sexual orientation should not be admitted to the armed forces and should not, if discovered, be allowed to remain serving in them.

Whatever the fashionable theorists may say, it is plain to the rest of us that allowing those with unconventional sexual appetites into these traditional institutions will inevitably result in a serious security problem.

Heterosexually active men who are perversely attracted to the Princess of Wales must *not* be permitted to join the Army and must never reach the rank of Major.

If they do, I can confidently predict that it will end in disaster.

E. Strobes
pp Field Marshal Lord Gnome
Great Hewitt
Legover-in-the-Saddle
Berks

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COLOUR SECTION

THE only Tory MP who emerges with any honour from the Scott report is Sir Hal Miller, the former Tory MP for Bromsgrove.

In 1990 Miller bitterly attacked the prosecution of the managing director of Walter Somers, which made barrels for the supergun. He revealed to anyone who would listen that he had asked the government about the Walter Somers contract way back in 1988, and had offered on behalf of the company to withdraw from the contract if it broke the export laws.

For his outspoken comments in defence of the company and against the government, Miller was abused and smeared. He decided to leave parliament and vacate his seat at Bromsgrove. The Tory hierarchy breathed a sigh of relief and urged the local association to pick someone more reliable. Its choice was the former Tory leader of Bournemouth council, Roy Thomason.

By the time he was selected, Thomason was already in desperate difficulties. In December 1993 he resigned as a director of Karelodge. The auditors' report for the company that year was heavily qualified, showing more than £1 million in irrecoverable debts and a bank guarantee of £1.176 million which had not been provided for. The problem was that the banks had only agreed to lend the money on the personal guarantee of the new Tory MP for Bromsgrove, who now represents Mr Major's majority. Bring back Sir Hal.

THE assurance from Sir Marcus Fox that after Scott the government has a "clear run" to the next election has not entirely comforted the Tory party in London.

The Magill report on corruption at Westminster council is causing more anxiety than the Scott report ever did; and the final pronouncement on the gerrymandering of the council under Lady Porter, the Mrs Thatch of local government, is expected towards the end of March. Like Scott, Magill has been battered from all sides by expensive lawyers hired by top Tories who are desperate to tone down his initial denunciation of widespread unlawful vote-rigging by the Porter crew.

Porter herself cannot hope to escape criticism, but she has retired and is safe in Israel. The Tories' chief concern is for the hide of Barry Legg, the Tory MP for Milton Keynes. Legg initially tried to distance himself from the Porter gerrymander, but his involvement became clearer and clearer from the council documents at the time. The fear/hope is that if Magill comes down too hard on Legg, another prop of the government majority in parliament might be kicked away.

PRISON NEWS

THE prison service is battling valiantly to solve the problems of overcrowding, suicides, escapes and the pervasive drug culture: it is employing an extra 100 accountants.

Perhaps by multi-tasking they can replace the 3,000 uniformed officers whose jobs were recently cut.

IRATE Tories complained to the BBC last week about the extravagant plug given to Peter Mandelson's new book by *On The Record*, the Sunday lunchtime show. Even John Humphrys's accompanying interview with Mandy had, they said, been uncharacteristically tame.

Bosses at news and current affairs held an inquiry and concluded that Mandelson had indeed been let off far too lightly. The culprit was fingered as Simon Buckby, a reporter who had made the film and had drafted Humphrys's questions.

When *On The Record* editor David Jordan summoned Buckby for a bollocking, however, the wily hack saved him the trouble by resigning forthwith and announcing that he wished to pursue a political career instead.

Unbeknown to his employers, Buckby has already got himself on the shortlist of Labour candidates for Corby. Now that he has ingratiated himself with Mandelson, his future seems assured.

The Queen's press secretary Charles Anson publicly thrashed the duchess at the time of the split, while his colleagues have done so to me on many occasions.
Daily Mirror

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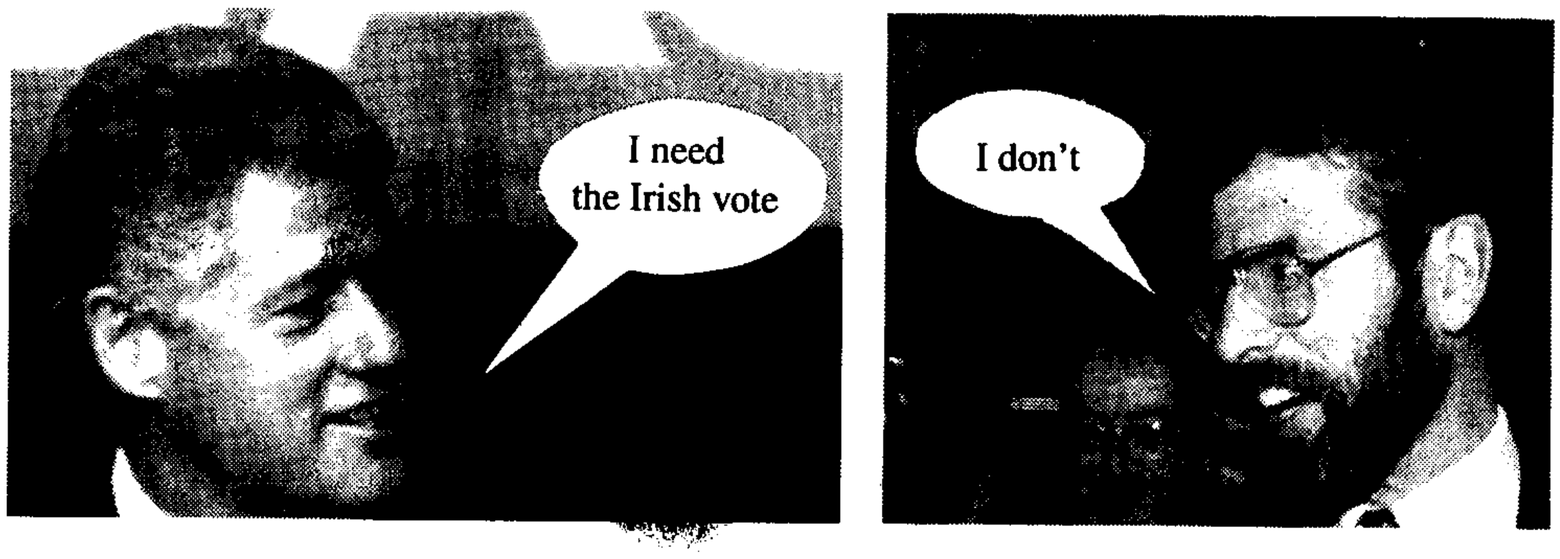
ADAMS VISA SHOCK



Street Of Shame

THE release of convicted fraudster Darius Guppy has had a curious effect on one of his erstwhile champions, chucklesome *Evening Standard* political columnist Ann Applebaum.

One of her many memorable contributions to the annals of journalism was her attack in the *Spectator* on what she called poison-pen journalism.

Writing under the pseudonym Veronica Lodge, Applebaum, who is an American, took the British press to task for running down people of achievement merely out of envy for their privileged background, talent or good fortune. Without declaring an interest — she and her husband Radek Sikorski were both close friends of Guppy's — she cited the way the press had reported the pre-trial proceedings against Guppy as evidence of its venality.

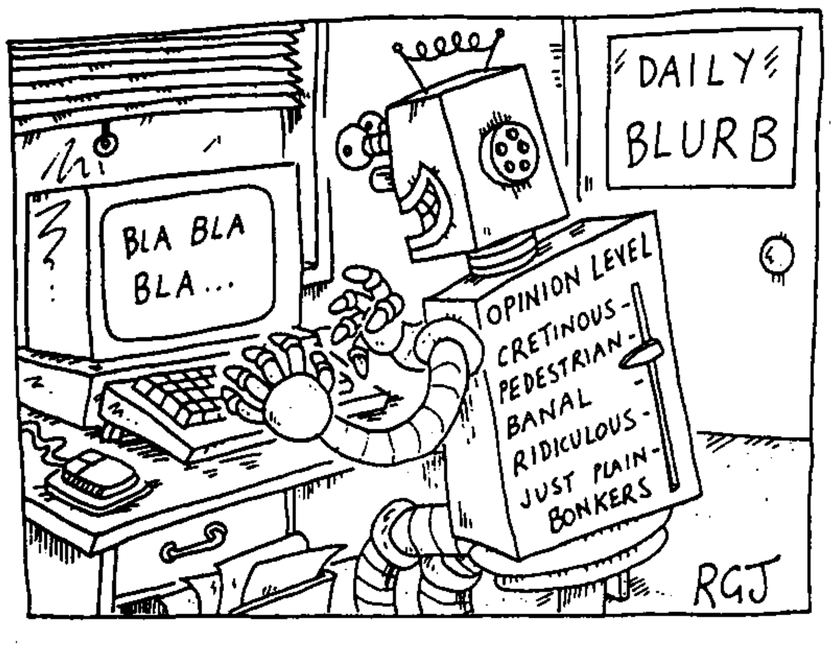
Recently, though, when asked by the *Standard*'s newsdesk if she could provide names or numbers for friends of Guppy, Applebaum loftily declared she had not seen him for three years, that he could in no way be described as a friend of hers and that she was therefore unable to assist.

Meanwhile another former friend of Guppy's, *Daily Telegraph* hack Boris "Hit-Man" Johnson, has been selected as Tory candidate in a safe Labour seat in Wales. Johnson was mortified last year when the *Mail on Sunday* printed the transcript of a phone conversation in which he appeared to agree that he would provide Guppy with the home address of a troublesome *News of the Screws* hack so Guppy could send someone round to put him in hospital. No doubt the campaigning Boris will now be preaching to electors on the merits of locking up criminals for the duration of their natural lives.

SEVERAL readers have suggested we should start an Emap-plug column to complement our I-Sky feature.

They may have a point. Last year the Emap group took over *UK Press Gazette*, since when it has been stuffed with headlines such as "Emap Consumer Titles 'Beat Paper Prices and Lottery' " — even though a table in the accompanying story indicates that many Emap publications have suffered a sales slide in the past six months: *Mean Machine Sega* is down 25.3 per cent; *Garden News* is down 9.8 per cent; *Classic Car Weekly* is down 11.8 per cent; and so on. Other recent examples of proprietorial immodesty include the headline "Emap Sews Up Global Telecoms Publishing" and a piece crowing over the success of Emap's yobbish car-magazine, *Max Power*.

So where can one turn for truly independent media coverage? Probably not to *Media Week* (whose 9 February issue ran a big news story headed "Piccadilly Sales Boss Takes Key Emap Post"), or *Broadcast* magazine or *TV World*: they, too, are all owned by Emap.



Technological Advances in Journalism
No. 94: Robocolumnist

Private I-I-I!

THIS ISSUE'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch.

		Ego Rating
1	Jan Moir (Observer 3/3)	2.29
2	Kate Morris (Telegraph 2/3)	2.00
3	Suzi Feay (IoS 3/3)	1.83
4	David Starkey (Sunday Times 3/3)	1.81
5	Jo Brand (Independent 2/3)	1.80
6	Amy Jenkins (Daily Express 28/2)	1.78
7	"Dr" Barry Jones (Mail 29/2)	1.58
8	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 3/3)	1.56
9	Nigel Nicolson (S. Telegraph 3/3)	1.43
10	Paul Johnson (Mail 2/3)	1.16

THE *Daily Express* boasts that it is "the paper they're all talking about". And so, naturally enough, what they're all talking about on the nation's racecourses is Danny Hall, the paper's racing editor.

Turf aficionados are fascinated by the uncanny resemblance between his recent book *How To Win On The Horses* and a much earlier work on the same subject, *Betting to Win* by "Supernap" of the *Daily Herald*, published in 1963 — when Hall was about 10 years old and presumably not writing under that *nom de plume*.

"Normally," Danny Hall warns, "the novice backer who works for a living will not have more than an hour or so in the morning to devote to the study of the day's races." Therefore you should study only races for two-year-olds and ignore everything else. "This, I know, is the gospel of perfection and will be ignored by 99 per cent of all readers."

Or, as Supernap put it all those years ago: "A novice backer will be wise to confine himself to two-year-old plates. Normally if he works for his living he will not have more than half an hour or so in the morning to devote to the study of the day's programme... This, I know, is the gospel of perfection and will be ignored by 99 per cent of my readers."

And so it goes on: vast swathes of Hall's book are simply plagiarised, almost verbatim, from poor old Supernap.

METROPOLITAN police chief Sir Paul Condon boobed during a briefing to Britain's newspaper editors about Scotland Yard's response to renewed IRA activity.

Condon said he expected the violence to last until the general election, after which there would be "a new chemistry" — an observation seeming to presage a Blair victory. When asked if the peace process could be boosted by an early election, Condon realised the trap he'd fallen into. After the briefing, the editors were phoned individually and reminded forcibly of the non-attributable, hush-hush nature of the chat. Luckily they all respected his wishes.

FOLLOWING his brutal sacking of 44 hacks last week, it would be easy to conclude that *Independent* editor Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson is an unsympathetic employer. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Polly Toynbee can testify.

The deeply earnest Toynbee took Gorbals out to lunch to persuade him that the paper needed more "female-friendly" coverage.

After listening thoughtfully to her arguments, Charlie nodded his approval. "I quite agree with you, Polly. In fact there are two features later in the week for which I would welcome your input."

"And what are they?" asked the delighted Toynbee, imagining several thousand words on equal pay, maternity leave and other such matters.

"One's on aphrodisiacs," Gorbals revealed. "The other's on lipstick."

IN AN interview with the *Guardian*, Nigel Dempster boasts that Lady Annabel Birley gave him his "first gossip story" in October 1973 when she phoned him to say she was pregnant by her then lover James Goldsmith.

Since he had been working on gossip columns since the mid-1960s, this seems to be tantamount to an admission that it took him about eight years to come up with his first story. Er, well done, Nigel!

The purpose of the *Grauniad* piece was to promote his new magazine, *Dempsters*. (Nigel is a man of limited education, but surely even at Sherborne they teach pupils that the genitive requires an apostrophe?) Not content with this puff, he surfaced in the *Daily Mail* the following day to reveal that Camilla Parker-Bowles will never marry the Prince of Wales, citing as his source "the magazine *Dempsters*, launched tonight".

Since Dumpster is paid a large six-figure salary to deliver gossip for the *Mail*, why are his employers willing to let him purvey "inside information" in his own glossy mag? One theory is that executives at Associated Newspapers are prepared to humour him because *Dumpsters* is so obviously doomed to fail. But this is obviously malicious nonsense. The launch issue of the magazine is full of fascinating revelations: Emma Thompson and Kenneth Branagh have split up; the Marquess of Blandford has been having a hard time; the Duke and Duchess of York are still on friendly terms; Hugh Grant and Elizabeth Hurley have had their ups and downs. How can it not succeed?

ONE story that has yet to appear in *Dumpsters* concerns a famous single-mother who is now facing the possibility of homelessness and bankruptcy because of legal harassment by an equally famous but far richer man. The woman is Sara Keays; the man is, er, Nigel Dempster.

The tale began in 1990 when he published *Nigel Dempster's Address Book*, a mish-mash of stale titbits notable mainly for its conspicuous lack of addresses, and indeed phone numbers. But it was embellished by a photo of Sara Keays and Cecil Parkinson walking in Central Park, New York, which had first appeared in the paperback edition of her autobiography.

Since Keays had not given permission for Dumpster to use the picture, she sued for breach of copyright. The publishers admitted their error and apologised; they were therefore dropped from the action. But Dumpster fought on; and, by maintaining that he had nothing to do with the choice of photographs, won his case — whereupon he handed her a bill of about £70,000 for costs. Keays insisted on having the bill "taxed" (ie checked by an independent assessor), as a result of which it was reduced by £30,000. Even so she still couldn't pay, not least because she is effectively prevented from earning a living by the Mary Bell Order which Cecil Parkinson has taken out against her (see recent *Eyes*).

Everything then went quiet for a while. But a few weeks ago the wealthy Dumpster began to pursue his costs by obtaining a legal charge over the cottage in the West Country where Sara Keays lives with her daughter. Lloyd's Bank, with whom Keays has a mortgage, was naturally alarmed by this threat and promptly froze her bank account. Thus, thanks to Dumpster's gallant manoeuvre, she is now unable even to write a cheque to pay her electricity bill — or, for that matter, to take out a subscription to the brilliant new magazine *Dumpsters*.

WHAT'S ON

TOURISTS intending to visit the great metropolis of Manchester sometimes ask Lord Gnome which of the city's many attractions they should be sure to see.

There is the famous tram system, of course, and the equally famous Manchester United football ground. But the curious traveller should not overlook the charms of Court 5 at Manchester crown court, where Mr Justice McCullough presides with a sure but firm hand over the course of justice.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! *THE Marquesa had to be revived with sal volatile — and a medicinal bottle of pink champagne — after hearing the impertinent comments about Prince Charles made by Ron Davies MP.*

As John Major has so rightly said, there is no place in politics for such lèse majesté: Mr Davies should resign at once and live in exile for the rest of his days, covered in shame.

But why stop there? Older readers may recall an even more distasteful item, broadcast on That Was The Week That Was many years ago, which described the Queen drowning in the Thames as the royal barge sank beneath her.

Who was the author of this treasonable "satire"? Step forward Ian Lang MP, now president of the board of trade.

HALLO! TO PAKISTAN with the Princess of Wales, whose generosity as a fund-raiser is wasted in a nation of uptight Islamic ingrates.

First there are whispers that she is only in Lahore because she has a crush on a local doctor. Tosh. The alleged doctor is lower middle class, so any crush would have to be the other way round, for a start.

As the guest of glamorous Imran Khan and his child bride Jemima, Diana then has to put up with a series of petty snubs by Lahore's so-called society. Because she will never be queen, Lahore's snooty "begums" say she is no longer royal. And because she is an adulteress, one begum tells Imran that under Islamic law Diana should actually be stoned to death rather than invited to dinner, as he wants.

Imran had expected the begums to queue up to worship Di, but was sorely disappointed. When he asked Sarwat Ehsan Ali to lend her palatial mansion for a dinner, she reminded Khan that he hadn't invited her to his wedding and showed him the door.

Another begum complained that Diana and Jemima were debasing Pakistani clothes — as if such a thing were possible! — and in desperation the former playboy and cricketer appealed to a local billionaire, Bashir, to host a dinner at his large and vulgar house, which is decorated in the "Italian style". He too declined to play with a tampered ball.

In the end the party ended up at "Salt 'n' Pepper," a local club, where some rude Punjabi students at the next table tried to convince Diana that Lahore was pronounced "Le-whore!" She won't be going there again in a hurry.

HALLO! *THE Marquess of Bath is getting quite beyond the bounds of decent society. Invited to an otherwise delightful dinner party in Chelsea, chez sculptress Shenda Amory, the bearded loon turned up with two 'tarty' gels, mistakenly reported as being a pair of the eccentric peer's celebrated 'wifelets'. Not so. They were, in fact, common trollops. Alas, one hussy was so "high" that, after much scatological shrieking, she fell flat on her face, unconscious. And sprawled there, snoring, one could not help but notice that His Lordship's friend was also, er, knickerless.*

Quite aristocratic, really!

HALLO! POOR Major James Hewitt has fallen on bad times. Since his initial revelations about his affair with the lovely Princess of Wales, the dashing soldier has kept his lips firmly sealed about his former flame — despite being labelled a traitorous rat by an unromantic press.

The Marquesa hears that the major's silence followed a plea from Princess Diana herself, via an intermediary, that Hewitt should spill no more royal beans.

Hewitt meant to keep his word, but then as he once said: "The only thing I'm good at is sex and horses." With these useful though limited talents, Hewitt has not managed to work in a year and as a consequence is virtually penniless. So his only options were to sell his story or sell his worldly goods. The bon viveur could hardly face bankruptcy, so he is trying to sell the saucy TV interview with himself by "authoress" Anna "Desperate Dan" Pasternak.

Even if he manages to get the £3 million he wants for the interview, Hewitt will not be able to relax. He has recently become convinced that MI5 want him "taken out" since it eavesdropped on his lurid phone conversations with Princess Di. The Marquesa's sentiments were entirely with the brave major when he opined last week: "Oh dear, I hope I've done the right thing."

"Hi! How absolutely wonderful to hear from you — can I just transfer you to the answering machine?"

HALLO! AS BRIAN faces a lonely new life as a divorcé, with only Mrs Parker Bowles to console him, some state secrets, at least, are safe from grubby 'kiss and tell' revelations.

Oh, if only Brian had married sweet Jane Ward - whom he wooed fifteen years ago when she was assistant manager of the Guards Polo Club. Disgracefully, after all these years, The People newspaper has offered Jane, now a Leicestershire housewife, a king's ransom to "tell all" about her romance with the heir to the throne. Naturally well-bred Jane turned this impertinent offer down flat.

"All they want to know," she wails, "is the size of his willie."

HALLO! TO THE Vatican for an audience with His Holiness. Waiting in the Pontiff's cosy ante-chamber, a charming Monseigneur translates some of the Italian newspapers, full of news about a terrible bomb blast in London.

The IRA, says the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera*, is an organization of "Catholic terrorists". However, the official Vatican daily, *L'Osservatore Romano*, calls them, "Guerilla fighters for independence".

Confused by this theological complexity, I raise the matter with John Paul II. "*Benedico benedicat*," he murmurs, making the sign of the cross, "*Pace nel mondo*."

Unfortunately I do not speak Polish.

HALLO! OUR old chum Chris Patten has landed himself in hot water in Hong Kong where he is governor-general and commander-in-chief. He appeared in public wearing dangerously garish shorts carrying the logo for Marlboro, the cigarettes-to-cancer people.

Poor Chris! He can't do anything right, it seems. He's also been attacked for speaking at a conference sponsored by Marlboro last June. Presumably Chris is trying to emulate his heroine, Margaret Thatcher, whose old job he is now after. The ex-Prime Minister is of course a £500,000-a-year consultant to Philip Morris, the makers of Marlboro.

HALLO! THE unhappiness at St George's House, Windsor, the religious 'think tank' founded by Prince Philip (see last Eye) continues to fester, and the Duke has appointed a three-person enquiry team, including Lady Cox and Labour MP Paul Boateng, to look into the staff's hatred of their Warden, Professor Richard Whitfield.

A previous report found they regard Whitfield as 'devious' and "a bully who likes to pick on one individual, mostly women". Oh dear! Several strong complaints have been lodged against Whitfield, a right-wing 'family values' man.

One of Whitfield's female victims was the highly respected academic Anne Noble, St George's first visiting Fellow, whom he swiftly sacked.

Professor Whitfield, famously, at a seminar for senior clergymen asked them to think: what was in their parents' minds at the moment of conception?

A question the Professor's colleagues seem to be asking every day.

HALLO! POOR Michael Jackson has taken to surrounding himself with dummies. And I don't just mean his PR people! Shortly before Christmas, staff at the Manhattan showroom of Hindsgaul, the world's largest manufacturer of mannequins, were surprised to receive a call from a security firm: a celestially adored celeb was about to descend, they were alerted, and the store should be cleared. Moments later, lo!, there was 'Wacko Jacko'.

Handsgaul, a Danish Charitable Trust, is famous for the quality of its effigies, created in clay from life models. 'Wacko' picked out a large selection of these expensive and exquisite mannequins, which were promptly dispatched to his apartment. Michael wisely chose a selection of cherubic little tykes. As his unfortunate experiences in the past have proved,this is a lot safer than having real children anywhere near him.

HALLO! *THE Marquesa catches up with shy and retiring political novelist Edwina Currie, as she bewitches the English Speaking Union with a characteristically low-key sales spiel.*

As Edwina finishes her patter she galvanises her elderly audience by waving aloft an illustration from one of her intellectual tomes — a picture of a be-stockinged female with read-me calves. Alas, it is too much for one gentleman who has hung on each of Edwina's salacious remarks and double entendres.

He rises slowly. "Do tell me what you think," he begs, quivering gently, "of political correction?"

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

JOHN MAJOR's Northern Ireland peace initiative really is in trouble. Just as a masked gunman from the Red Hand Commando pops up threatening a new wave of sectarian killings in Belfast, a sinister group of disaffected ultra-unionists on the Conservative benches has announced the end of its own loyalist ceasefire.

Prominent among the new breed of Tory hard men now resuming hostilities are David Wilshire, MP for Spelthorne, and Andrew Hunter, the member for Basingstoke. Wilshire is a parliamentary nonentity with a background mostly in local government, while Hunter, the chairman of the backbench Northern Ireland committee, is perhaps best known for championing the "independent" vice-den state of Bophuthatswana set up by the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The pair have attracted a large number of sad-case Tories who envy Gerry Adams's daily exposure on the telly and his VIP receptions at the White House. Many now accuse John Major of gutless surrender to the Provisionals in setting his 10 June date for all-party talks, and they are demanding a security crackdown on the IRA.

In the tearoom last week one old booby was overheard muttering the word "Rhodesia" over and over again. For Conservative backbenchers this has enormous totemic significance: implying that Northern Ireland is about to become one of those issues of "honour" that split the party down the middle.

Meanwhile the prime minister has sent chief whip Alastair Goodlad to explain that he wasn't bullied into his June date by the bombers, he simply recognised that Northern Ireland's politicians will need 10 months of incessant blarney to settle their differences before the general election.

'Urquhart'

FRANK BARBER, the latest of Tony Blair's education advisers to plump for private education for his child, has never shirked unpleasant education decisions.

He enthusiastically agreed to join Gillian Shephard's first Educational Association, which was formed with the specific intention of closing down Hackney Downs school — an unpleasant assignment which it quickly accomplished to the horror of parents, teachers and children at the school.

The association was heavily biased to the right: its chairman, Richard Painter, is an executive at ADT, a security systems business run by the energetically Tory businessman Michael Ashcroft, who specialises in freebies for Tory MPs. Barber's appearance on the association gave it just the "bi-partisan" image Shephard was looking for.

ANOTHER brilliant new parliamentary candidate has been appointed by the Conservatives: Tyne Bridge will be fought for by one Adrian "Podge" Lee, a former Young Conservative and associate of Harry Phibbs in the now disbanded Federation of Conservative Students.

After the 1992 party conference, Lee took £5,000 libel damages from the *Mail on Sunday* for an article which wrongly bracketed him with even more unsavoury rightwingers than himself. His solicitor was Simon McIlwain, who was suspended from the Monday Club in March 1984 for trying to mount a right-wing coup, with John Pinniger, to take over the club.

Lee's strong rightwing presence on the candidates' list must dispel the unpleasant rumour that the Tories are desperate for quality candidates as their current representatives jump from the political ship as fast as they can.

THE Atrium restaurant at 4 Millbank is a convenient feeding ground and watering hole close to the House of Commons, and prestigious companies often hold bashes there.

British Gas asked a lot of MPs along to a standard "do" there on 7 February, and a fair cross-section of honourable members decided it would be a good opportunity for them to express their constituents' many complaints about British Gas to the relevant executives.

Shock horror. No sooner had the MPs arrived than they discovered that British Gas had converted the evening into a "farewell and thank you" binge for Cedric "The Pig" Brown, the chief executive who is leaving the firm to spend more time with his banknotes.

Even worse was the discovery by MPs that several impertinent members of BBC staff were gazing at the soirée from their offices which overlook the restaurant, and even noting down what appeared to be an attendance register.

This didn't matter so much for the Tories, who included transport minister John Watts, Toby Jessel and Phil Gallie; but it was intensely embarrassing for Labour MPs like George Foulkes, Alf Morris and Denis Canavan, all of whom support their party's principled opposition to the fat cats of the privatised utilities.

A NOTABLE gap in the shiny new register of interests for the House of Lords appears at the letter "H".

Lord "Fatty" Hesketh, one of the few remaining friends of Mark Thatcher — with whom he shares a passion for car racing — has taken full advantage of the bizarre ruling that although peers must declare their consultancies, declaration of directorships is "discretionary".

So "Fatty" has discreetly failed to declare that he is a director of Britain's biggest arms company, British Aerospace, and one of its biggest engineering companies, Babcock International.

'Backbiter'

WATER WORLD

MORE bad news from the privatised water companies, who have announced their new prices.

Despite predictions of industry regulator Ian Byatt that bills would level out and eventually fall under privatisation, the water companies all announced increases above the rate of inflation.

Some — like Severn Trent and the Lyonnaise Des Eaux-owned Essex and Suffolk water companies — gave a lower increase to corporate customers and tapped ordinary consumers to make up the shortfall.

But what sort of service are the water companies offering at these inflated prices? According to another report, leakage figures are disastrous. Welsh Water has the highest losses at an enormous 37.8 percent. North West Water and disaster-stricken Yorkshire come second and third with leakage rates of more than 36 per cent.

Byatt's solution? He wrote to all the water companies suggesting they encourage customers to cut down on usage.

● WHILE the National Rivers Authority drip feeds warnings that unless there is heavy rainfall soon many areas can expect water shortages this summer, Thames Water has the opposite problem.

The water table under parts of London is rising alarmingly at around two metres a year. Thames Water bosses recently met London Underground and the Royal Mail at the Commons to discuss what to do. Thames said it hoped to pump the water away and use it, while London Underground's infrastructure systems engineer, Mike Gellatley, said an independent report had been sought from a firm of consultants called CIRIA.

All interested parties can be assured that CIRIA is an excellent company — as its non-executive director Mike Gellatley can attest.

● ONLY a month to go before the launch of the Environment Agency, the new monster quango that will take over the roles of the National Rivers Authority, Her Maj's inspectorate of pollution and local waste regulation authorities. An NRA spokesman stressed that "staff will be an important resource" to the new agency. Could this be why the NRA has shed 1,200 staff in the last couple of years, shaping up for their new streamlined partnership? The HMIP has not taken on staff either and the local waste authorities will not bring any staff to the agency as they are manned by local authority workers at the moment.

The only refreshment she was given until the next morning was a bottle of water passed by prisoners in the next cell.

Independent

NUCLEAR NEWS

BRITISH Energy, the name modestly chosen by nuclear power as it seeks buyers in the private sector, has been subjected to an attempt at black propaganda by the government.

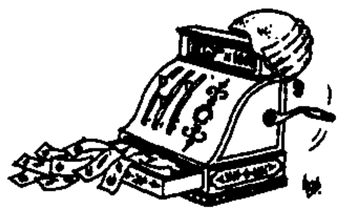
The nuclear company's managers are resisting the prospect of being thrown on to the market with £7 billion of liabilities (for decommissioning power stations and disposing of waste), round their neck. The government is impatient to get rid of the nukes and to collect £2 billion for pre-election tax cuts from the sale.

So there emerged, as if by magic, a report that the American power station operator Duke Power was interested in buying British Energy. Alas this was the first Duke Power had heard of the plan.

Exactly the same ploy was used of course by the government when it was trying to get rid of PowerGen: it declared that Hanson was interested in taking it over. The truth is simpler. As Gordon McKerron, a member of the science policy research unit at Sussex university and a widely-respected expert on energy economics, puts it: "The government wants to raise a significant sum of money selling British Energy for tax cuts, and it wants British Energy to take on all the liabilities and I think that is squaring the circle. You cannot get both significant cash and shovel all the liabilities into the private sector."

That is the bitter lesson the government is still refusing to accept.

LEGAL NEWS



THE professional conduct committee of the Bar council is going ahead with the complaint against David Cocks QC and his two juniors in the prosecution of Roger Levitt, Jonathan Fisher and Jane Bewsey.

In essence the complaint — made by John Perry, Levitt's solicitor, and John Marshall MP — charged Cocks with misleading the attorney-general and the media about his involvement in Levitt's plea bargain, for which he subsequently blamed the trial judge.

At a meeting on 7 February Cocks's cronies did their best to prevent a referral to a full hearing, but various northern silks insisted he should be tried on all four of the charges levelled by Marshall, and that Fisher and Bewsey should be tried on one charge.

● AMONG the pricey lawyers hired at taxpayers' expense by Lord Howe for the purpose of rubbishing the Scott inquiry before the report was published was Lord Lester QC, the distinguished radical barrister who takes the Liberal Democrat whip in the House of Lords.

Lord Lester's chambers include Presiley Baxendale QC, counsel to the inquiry itself. Thus the taxpayer ended up paying for counsel to the inquiry and for counsel rubbishing the inquiry: an exciting new double liability to the same chambers.

William Waldegrave, the embattled chief secretary to the treasury, secured even more prestigious legal advice, this time unpaid. He got some free help from Lord Justice Lennie Hoffman, who, like his colleague Sir Richard Scott, learnt his trade in South Africa. Lord Justice Hoffman is a close personal friend of William and Caroline Waldegrave.

NOOKS and CORNERS

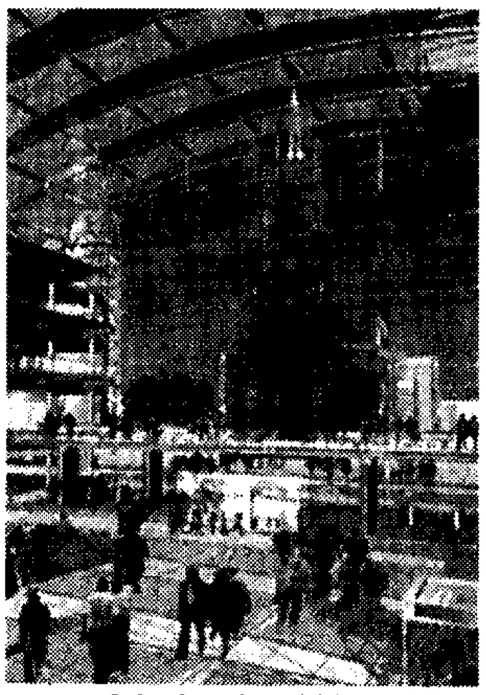
LIBRARIES were once the most dignified and splendid of buildings. The best are temples of knowledge: great and noble spaces in which all learning could (once) be encompassed; spaces at once grand and intimate, providing quiet places to read and also much to look at and be inspired by.

One thinks of great rooms lined with shelves, like those at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Trinity College, Dublin, of splendid domed buildings, like the Radcliffe Camera at Oxford and the Reading Room at the British Museum. No longer, of course: new libraries are usually machines for processing information in.

After all, most modern, trained librarians hate books even more than they hate readers. Both are a nuisance. Librarians much prefer computers and microfilm readers — any gadget, in fact, which separates literate human beings from those old-fashioned things called books. And the architectural consequences of this are alarming, as the sad story of Norwich Central Library demonstrates — although nothing has yet happened in Britain to equal the frivolous absurdity of the new Bibliotheque de France in Paris, Mitterrand's last joke against the French, in which books are placed in glass towers and the readers shoved underground (it makes the new British Library seem a model of good sense and sobriety).

Norwich Central Library, an unexceptional but efficient building of the early 1960s which incorporated the Norfolk Record Office, was burned out in August 1994. In its way it was a fire as dreadful as other conflagrations — like those that destroyed the library at Alexandria and the university library at Louvain during the Great War. The burning of a library is the destruction of civilisation: 200,000 books were destroyed, together with newspapers and much of Norfolk's special local history collection. The cause? An overheating plug in the United States of America Air Force Memorial Library, which had been reported but not repaired. The nearest fire station was only 50 yards away, but its only fire platform was away being repaired, so one had to be brought from Great Yarmouth. Just as in Venice, when the Fenice was burning, the fire brigade had no water as the neighbouring canals had been drained...

Norfolk was shocked by the loss and rallied round. Books have been donated and strenuous efforts are being made to replace



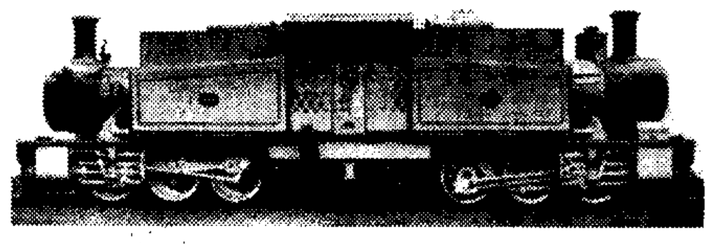
some of the lost local history material. The old library was insured, so the bibliophiles and researchers and other literates of Norwich and Norfolk were looking forward to using a fine new building on the central site next to the City Hall and St Peter Mancroft Church. So are they going to get a new library? Well, no; not exactly. Norwich must be brought kicking and screaming into the 21st century, after all, and — thanks to successive governments of both colours — Norfolk, along with the rest of Britain, looks like having the most illiterate population in Europe in a few decades' time.

Hilary Hammond, the chief librarian, is a real trained librarian. That is, he much prefers computers to books. So instead of a new library he has agitated for the replacement to be full of computers and the latest information technology. The result is "Technopolis" — an exciting scheme linked up to 14 "telecottages" and which will incorporate a "visitors' centre" with a virtual reality time machine to explore Norwich's past and future; "Digital City" — a hi-tech business centre with a multi-media recording studio and 40 "work stations"; and — most important of all — the "agora", a meeting place with shops and restaurants. For nothing can be built in modern Britain without retail outlets.

You get the picture? But I almost forgot: there will also be a library, housing 110,000 books and recordings with 220 study desks and, more important, 59 computers. All this will cost some £79 million, which is rather a lot of money; but the council is hoping that the Millennium Commission will cough up £39 million for a building which will cost almost twice as much to run as the old library. A business plan commissioned by the council predicts that Technopolis will make a profit: perhaps it will, perhaps it won't.

And now an architect and a design have been chosen. The architect is Michael Hopkins, who proposes a huge high-tech shed with a glazed roof and a large glass wall, through which the Late Medieval church of St Peter Mancroft will be visible. There will be a huge open space flanked by exposed escalators — rather like the Pompidou Centre turned inside out. Perhaps it will be good — Hopkins is not a bad architect, after all. But that is not really the point. The point is that it is not a library. And that is sad. In fact it is barbarism. Soon they will be burning the books.

'Piloti'



SIGNAL FAILURES

AS Railtrack's flotation approaches the government is trying to offload one of its most time-consuming and complex duties: planning the timetables.

The botched timetable issued in September showed Railtrack's inability to cope with a task that was extremely difficult even before the railway was split up. What the public sees in the timetable books and leaflets is in fact only the tip of an enormous iceberg: Railtrack has to allocate slots in the internal rail timetable — which includes freight and passenger trains — to the train operators through protracted discussions with each party.

Railtrack is the logical body to do this as it has contact with every train operator in Britain; but the department of transport now wants to relieve Railtrack of this duty and heap masses of extra bureaucracy and legal wrangling on to the operators themselves.

The DoT has realised that timetable planning would be an enormous burden for a private Railtrack and — horror of horrors — could discourage potential shareholders. In December it wrote to the train companies suggesting they do the work themselves and tell Railtrack what they have agreed. The DoT was unanimously told to get stuffed, but it *so* desperate to offload Railtrack that it is considering doling out millions of pounds of extra subsidy for each operator to do the timetable, which could then be justified if it helped the government to get rid of Railtrack before the next election.

ANOTHER benefit emerging from privatisation is the predicted unravelling of London's Travelcard scheme.

Travelcards used to allow unlimited travel on *all* public transport in the capital, but Gatwick Express and Network SouthCentral no longer accept each other's Travelcards (even though they come from the same ticket machines which do not properly warn passengers of the tickets' validity).

When the absurd system is functioning correctly, anyone riding on an NSC train from Gatwick with a Gatwick Express Travelcard has their card confiscated by the guard. The guard issues a paper docket which the hapless passenger exchanges at Victoria booking office — where the queues are normally 20 yards long — for a NSC Travelcard. The passenger has paid £2.70 more for the Gatwick Express ticket than the NSC ticket costs: to claim a refund the passenger has to fill in forms which are then passed to Gatwick Express for processing.

'Dr B. Ching'

You can view this Art Exhibition as an Art Exhibition but also as a cave drawing discovered on the inner walls of my own skull. My vision is a firm but mitigated radicalism hit back and forth like a tennis ball between bold innovation and conventional beauty. I guess I'm just a first-class existentialist, *what is, is: what ain't, ain't.*

PHILIP DIGGLE
invitation to private view, Highgate Gallery

Helen (charles) is an activist and writer, giving lectures and facilitating workshops at a variety of organizations, groups and educational institutions. Her recent publications include chapters in S. Wilkinson and C. Kitzinger (eds) Heterosexuality: Feminism and Psychology Reader (1993, Sage) and in J. Bristow and A. Wilson Activating Theory: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Politics. The shape of her name reflects the origin of many Black family names in the nomenclature of European slave-owners.

Contributors' list to 'Reconstructing womanhood, reconstructing feminism' (Routledge)

CHILDREN OF GANDALF

Meeting *will* take place this Sunday at Wytham Woods — 3pm — gather at St Agnes' Oak. Please bring finger cymbals, ankle bells, waterproofs and wholemeal

Pseuds Corner

sandwiches to share. Usual activities, including copse trilling, dell dancing and tree embracing. Be prepared to weep a little. — Tristan.

Notice in Porter's Lodge, Mansfield College, Oxford.

" 'Wanker of the Week' is a tongue-in-cheek cultural critique of someone who is a sacred cow."

PETER STUART ('Girlie Show' producer)
Time Out

"If the Sistine Chapel could talk it would sound like this [an Alfa convertible]..."

JEREMY CLARKSON
Top Gear

My head is good because it's where it has been for the past ten years and it's getting a lot more confused, which I think is good. I think if I had a clear head at the moment I'd be very worried. The bizarreness at the moment is great to take from. It's like there's spikes, there's a smooth bit and then there's a spike and there's things to clamber over. So this is the interior landscape, the interior design of my brain at the present moment. It's like this shirt.

JAS MANN (of Babylon Zoo)
New Musical Express

"Fetishism and hysteria brings about the transfiguration of the commodity as the object of desire becomes the commodification of objective desire." – *A former Kings Cross prostitute.*

Two Kings Cross sights [sic] within walking distance of each other are utilized in an attempt to create an element of participation from the spectator as they walk from one location to the other.

57 VARIETIES OF FETISHISM & HYSTERIA
The Gallery, Pentonville Road, London N1

CONTRIBUTORS: J. Davis, M. Rachovides, M. Morris, E. Strobes, F. Templeton, B. Roughead.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Peak Practice (ITV)

CHANNEL controllers have what they call their "bankers" — series with a proven following which can be used as a secure basis for a new year's schedules.

One of ITV's, for the last few seasons, has been **Peak Practice**, the gentle doctors-in-the-Lakes saga. But suddenly, as preparations began for its fifth series in 1996, *Peak Practice* became that controller's nightmare: the Baring's Banker.

Previously a three-star establishment — with Kevin Whately, Amanda Burton and Simon Shepherd above the title — it was suddenly reduced to a one-star dive. Whately and Burton both left the series to spend more time with their families, after their families found out about the stars' alleged Cumbrian discussions during the shooting of the last series.

Carlton and Central, now uneasy joint landlords of the series, decided to continue with Shepherd alone. Producer Richard Handford, imported from *The Bill*, decided to attempt a "grittier" approach, building up the characters of the young locums played by Saskia Wickham and Gary Mavers and importing the admired character actor Larry Lamb as a new GP.

However, following a power struggle between Handford and another producer, Damien Timmer — nervously supervised by hitless Carlton drama chief, Jonathan Powell — Handford left the show and was replaced by yet another producer, Michelle Buck. She in turn removed Larry Lamb, two directors of photography and a costume designer and ordered the reshooting of the opening episode already in production. The agenda was no longer "grittier" but "warm and witty". The show was now to be built around Shepherd, whom ITV was promoting as a superstar with a pilot for a new solo show, *Bliss*. (*Bliss*, despite being a critical flop, is now destined for a series.)

And so, having endured more radical surgery than the patients in even its most melodramatic storylines, *Peak Practice* finally returned on 28 February. How did it look?

"I was watching that!"

Strangely, the storyline of the new first episode was about crisis and possible collapse. With brilliant subversiveness, scriptwriter Tom Anthony had included a series of coded references to the troubled gestation of series five. The plot involved Shepherd's character, Dr Will Preston, being left alone, with the whole show about to fall down around his ears. "Are you mad at Jack and Beth [the Whately and Burton characters] for leaving?" he was asked. "Things change," he replied grimly. A postcard from Jack and Beth in Africa revealed that they had had a bit of a disagreement. Ho ho.

Summoned before the local fundholder committee, Shepherd was informed that the sudden departures of his colleagues had threatened the entire future of the practice. Unless "patient numbers" (an obvious metaphor for ratings) remained stable, funds might have to be withdrawn: a bold reference to the attitude of Powell and other ITV chiefs to Shepherd.

Back in the surgery a friend asked Shepherd how things were going. "The last few months have not been good," he conceded. "But I've lived through worse. I've lived through much worse."

So, can *Peak Practice* maintain its viewer throughput and prevent fundholding status being withdrawn by ITV? The problem, on the evidence of the first episode, is with its last remaining star. Born to do stills for Burberry or Barbour catalogues, Shepherd struggles with dialogue and, while it is true there is no longer the problem of him being acted off the screen by Whately, there is the greater difficulty of there being no distraction from Shepherd's woodenness.

The plot-lines, too, were a peculiar combination of the pointlessly anodyne and the unbelievably sensational. A teenage boy was persuaded that smoking was a bad idea. A roofer with a brain tumour refused to undergo an operation but consented after Shepherd caught his hand after he tumbled from a roof following a black-out.

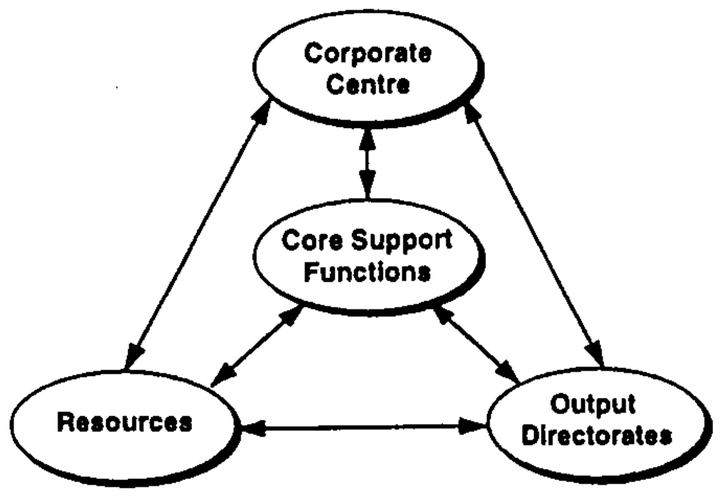
The advertising agency for Gold Blend coffee opted to screen their latest cliffhanger romance during the first episode, but this was not a wise decision. The superior acting, writing and direction of the coffee opera showed up *Peak Practice* for the Baring's Banker it now is. The rescue deal looks unlikely to work.

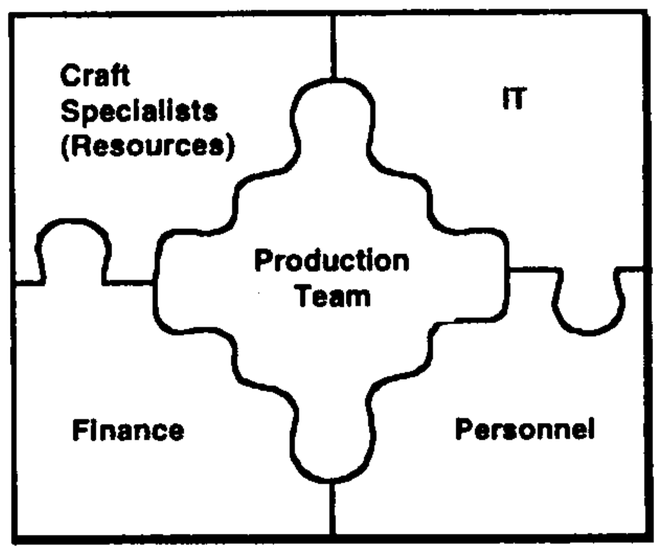
'Square Eyes'

HOW TELEVISION WORKS Pt 94.

AS PART of a series that will build over the coming weeks into a lavishly illustrated guide to what John Birt does with licence payers' money, the *Eye* is proud to reproduce plates from the massively dull *Efficiency Vision* document (140 pages) written for Birt and his fellow bosses.

This week, "Cross-Functional Pilot Teams" are explained.



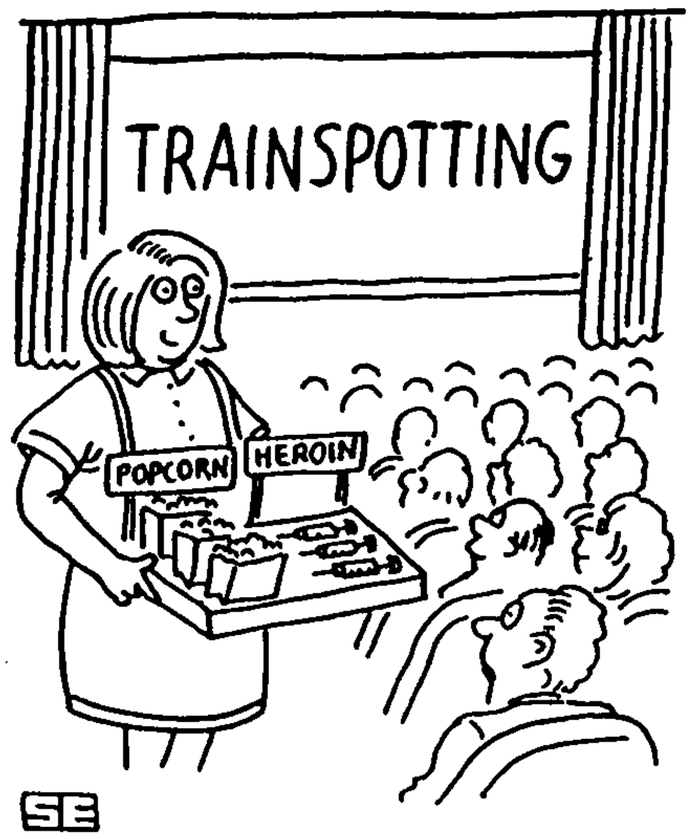


NICK FERRARI, head of programming at pisspoor L!veTV, is very enthusiastic about his channel and its bid for the royal legover interview with James Hewitt. "Of course we want this story and we will pursue it rigorously," he commented.

Not everyone is as enthusiastic about L!veTV as Ferrari, an ex-Murdoch apparatchik who has just moved house. When he tried to get his new home cabled to take CNN and the like, he also asked to be connected to L!veTV.

"You don't want that, mate," said the cable company rep. "It's ****ing bollocks!" A shamefaced Ferrari had to admit that if it was ****ing bollocks, it was he who was responsible.

THE BIRTTAS EMPIRE
HE'S AN INSENSITIVE MANAGER OF A DEMORALIZED LEISURE CENTRE...
WITH A LOYAL MADWOMAN AT HIS SIDE...
WHERE IT SEEMS NEITHER OF THEM ARE CAPABLE OF DOING ANYTHING RIGHT...
UNTIL ONE OF THEM LEAVES
Orkneys



WHEN film worthies gathered at BAFTA recently for a joint meeting with the Writers' Guild to discuss government funding of cinema, Mark Fisher, opposition spokesman on the arts, was hoping to grill a government spokesman on the Eurimages fiasco.

To save money, Virginia Bottomley's heritage department has pulled out of Eurimages, a Council of Europe organisation which invests in European film-making.

As a written parliamentary answer revealed, 22 films involving UK coproduction companies had been awarded Eurimages money in 1995 alone. What did the government representative, Lord Inglewood, have to say about this withdrawal of investment in British film?

Nobody at BAFTA ever found out: his lordship bravely failed to turn up or even apologize for his absence.

DURING the IRA ceasefire Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams was feted all over — particularly in Los Angeles where he attended a private party at the home of a Columbia Pictures executive. Now, Columbia, part of the Sony empire, desperately needs Adams's goodwill as it ponders whether to film in Ulster.

The hugely fashionable Brad Pitt wants his current production to include a location shoot in Belfast. Pitt visited the city twice — before the Canary Wharf blast — and felt positive. But the producers of *The Devil's Own* aren't sure.

A certain nervousness also surrounds the storyline, as described by Sony's PR people: "Harrison Ford is a New York cop who unwittingly adopts former IRA terrorist Brad Pitt. When the former IRA commando's old associates locate him, they begin exerting pressure on him to revert to his old life of terrorism."

All very likely, of course, there being a trend for New York cops to adopt 31-year-old men. But Sony's dilemma is that a newly resurgent IRA might not approve.

Warner Brothers is still planning to release *Michael Collins* this summer, an historically challenged film about the Irish legend featuring Liam Neeson. The director Neil Jordan has been repeatedly quoted as saying the movie could only have been made thanks to the peace process — a PR line that may be shot full of holes by the end of June.

LUVVIES

An actress friend once stormed to me that she had been asked to contribute to a party political broadcast without charge, when her boyfriend, a stage technician, was being paid the union rate. "Poor bloody actors," she said. She was right.

CLAIRE ARMISTEAD,
Guardian arts editor

Submitted by Ben Gibbons.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

HACKWATCH: Max Hastings

DURING one of his many purges and sacking-sprees at the *Daily Telegraph*, Max "Hitler" Hastings received a handsome tribute from his proprietor, Conrad Black. "Max," the tycoon announced proudly, "is good at drowning the kittens."

Hastings has now taken his tabby-terminating talents to the London *Evening Standard*, where blood is already flowing in the corridors following his firing of several long-serving hacks and photographers. But this is not enough to satisfy his bloodlust. In *The Field* magazine every month, Hitler boasts of the number of pheasants, grouse, snipe, woodcock, stags, rabbits and salmon he has consigned to an early death.

Those *Standard* staff who are wondering nervously about their own fate should read these columns.

October 1995: "I am," Hastings reveals, "one among many shooters who, on my day, can cope pretty adequately with the average south-of-England pheasant. But two or three times a season when I am confronted with seriously high birds, I am outclassed. I start each drive in that disastrous state of mind in which I *know* I am not going to be able to kill most of what comes over my head. When I put the gun up, fire and miss, I have no idea where the shot went." Innocent bystanders at the *Standard* and the *Telegraph* who have been struck down by his scattergun technique will know just what he means. The cause, he explains, is "poor coordination, from which I have always suffered".

December 1995: "Sportsmen feel ambivalent about woodcock. They are such fey, charming, reticent birds that many hardened pheasant- and grouse-shooters are reluctant to raise a gun to them." He reminisces about a jaunt in Ireland, where a woodcock paused at the base of a tree 10 yards in front him: "For an enchanting five or six seconds, the bird and I stood looking at each other before it took off again, back over the guns. How can one admire them so much, and yet shoot them? Every sportsman sometimes ask himself the question." But any hacks who think they can save themselves by imitating a woodcock should think again. No one at the *Standard* was more fey, charming and reticent than veteran reporter James Hughes-Onslow; nevertheless, he was gunned down with both barrels last month when Max decided he needed a bit of target practice.

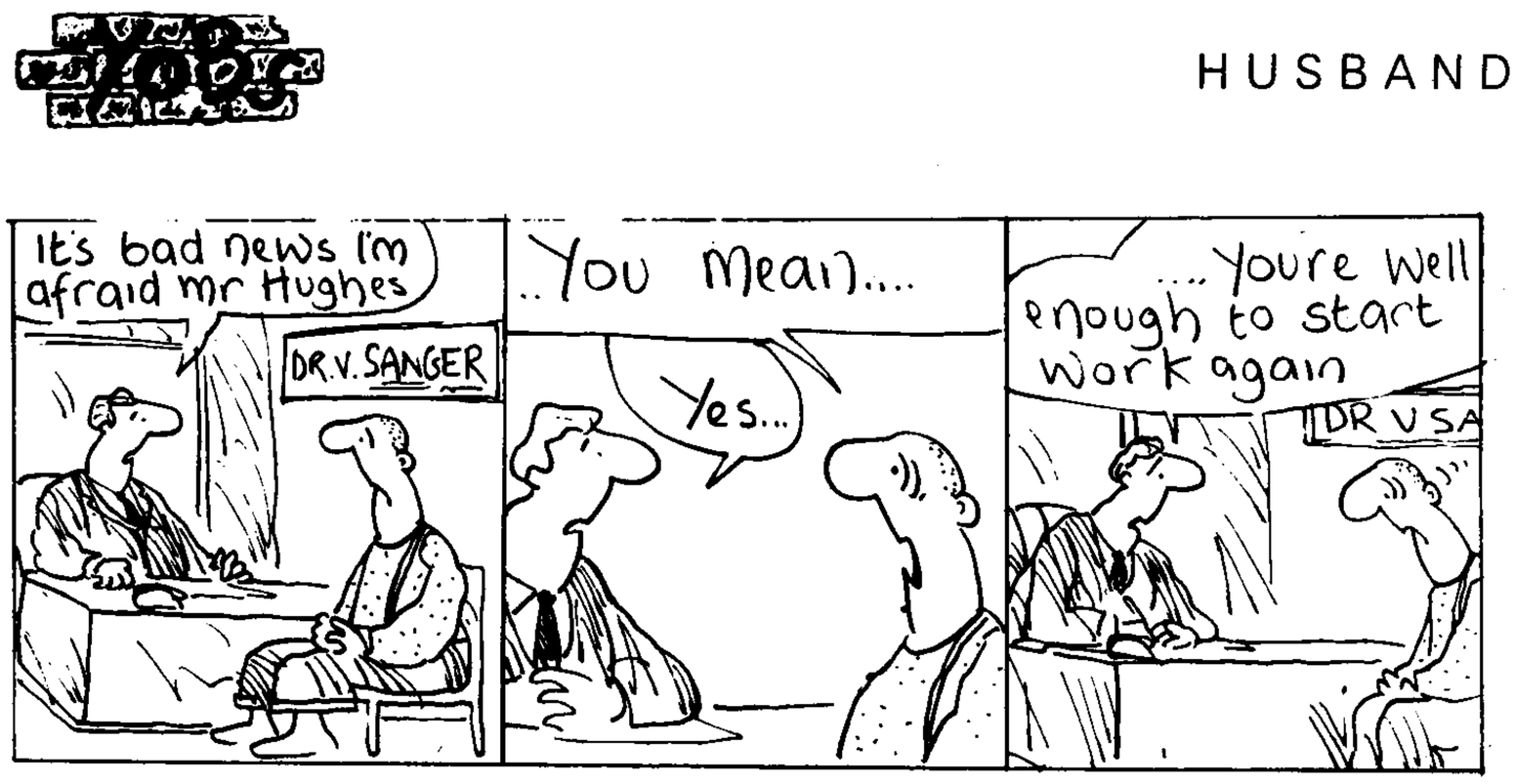
January 1996: Max recalls his 10 "wonderfully happy" years as a member of a shooting syndicate in Northamptonshire, which were marred only by his frosty relations with the local hunt. "I am sure remarks like this will provoke some fox-hunting readers to tell me I am talking nonsense, that most shire hunts rub along very well with shoots. But I have eavesdropped at enough well-lubricated shire dinner parties to know how both sides really feel. 'I'll get that stupid bugger Hastings out of that silly little shoot of his if it's the last thing I do,' to quote a celebrated local Master on a Saturday night a decade ago. A week after that remark was repeated to me, I shot a fox, coolly, secretly and pleasurably." Very sporting.

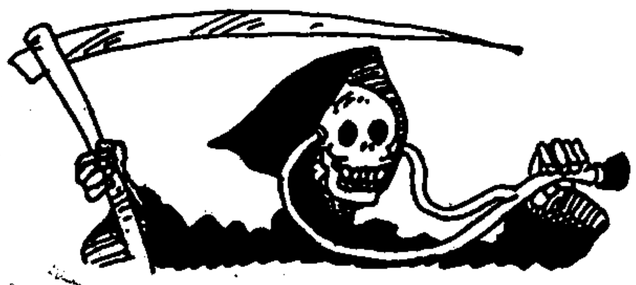
"You must be out of your tree!"

February 1996: Max turns his attention to the important question of kit and tackle. He is, he admits, an impulsive buyer — which is why "my bank manager shows distinct signs of nervousness when he hears that I have been shopping... Many of us keep a secret wish-list of toys we are determined to buy whenever we, or rather the selfsame bank managers, will allow. At the top of my list just now is a collapsible boat seat, because my long legs become so uncomfortable when I'm loch fishing..." Since a boat seat costs about £30 and Hastings earns £300,000 a year from the *Evening Standard*, it's hard to know why the bank manager should be so worried. Besides, Max has no hesitation in shelling out for more expensive equipment. "I am only an occasional stalker," he reveals, "but last season I was out with a friend who was given by his family for his 50th birthday a superb .243, fitted with a bipod and Austrian 6x42 'scope. As soon as I saw that bipod and the rock-steady shooting position it provided, I knew I had to have one." It is believed that his gun was mounted on this very bipod when he "took out" half the staff of his picture desk two weeks ago.

March 1996: Our hero's thoughts turn to salmon-fishing. "The Spey continues to produce an annual crop of marvellous catches," he notes wistfully, "and I am very jealous of those who have access to one of the great beats in June. I have only fished a couple of Spey beats, and I yearn to know the river better, especially in late spring." He could hardly drop a heavier hint: if the *Standard*'s galley-slaves wish to escape the editor's murderous instincts, they should club together and buy him fishing rights on the Spey forthwith. It seems a small price to pay to keep themselves from the dole queue.

Meanwhile, there is a footnote at the end of his March column: "Next month: why Max Hastings prefers good companionship to big bags." Why indeed? We can hardly wait to find out: lives may depend on it.





DOING THE ROUNDS

"THIS is a dreadful situation and is happening all over the country." So said Bristol GP Dr Mervyn McGowan after failing to find a bed at Bristol Royal Infirmary's oncology unit for a cancer patient in severe pain.

The cash strapped unit has already received an extra £400,000 this year from **Avon health care trust (AHCT)** after patients had their radiotherapy delayed. Without more help, about 20 patients a week will be discharged home under the care of their GPs. Incidentally, managerial and administrative salaries at AHCT have risen by an average 7 percent in the last 18 months, with 30 additional administrator posts created at the trust's regional offices.

● STAFF at hospitals in **Dumfries and Galloway** have had their lives seriously disrupted by the recent bad weather. They have been getting to work as best they can, which on the worst days meant not at all for those living away from the main towns. In keeping with the new NHS, those nurses who couldn't get in were told they had to take the days off as annual leave. This restriction does not, of course, apply to managerial staff.

● MAGGIE AIKMAN, who walked away from **Burnley health care trust** with a princely £245,000 after wrongfully dismissing a consultant obstetrician (*Eyes passim*), has resurfaced in **Gwent,** where she will become the £50,000 a year finance director from 1 April. As Pendle MP Gordon Prentice said at the time: "If Mrs Aikman's performance was lamentable, why did she receive such largesse? We must avoid a repeat of the astonishing, tragic farce that is Burnley health care trust." Watch this space.

● WHEN M.D. applied (successfully) to the **Bath** GP training scheme in 1987, there were 200 hopefuls fighting for four places, making it the most popular training scheme in the country. This year there were four applicants for four places.

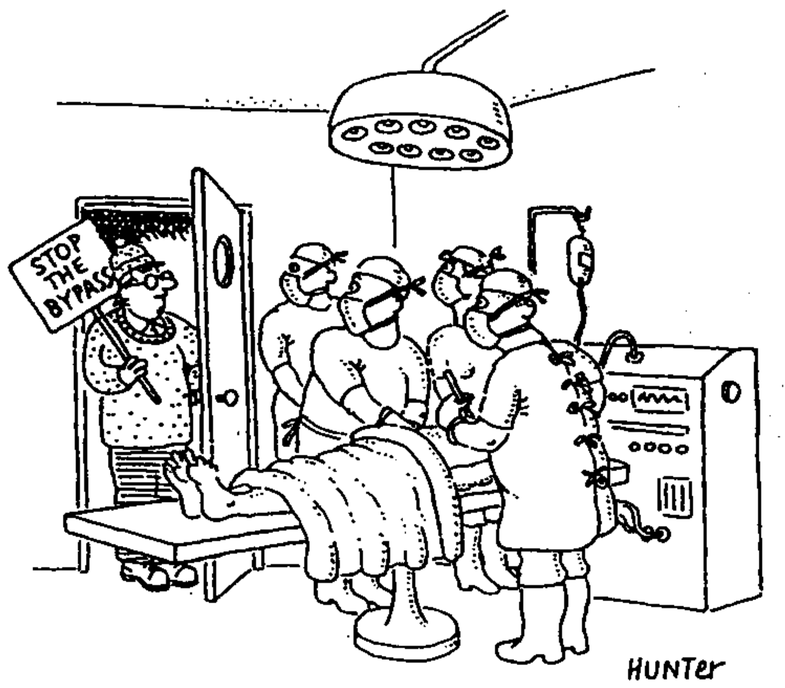
In less desirable areas training schemes have had to close because there have been no applicants at all. In inner **London** alone, the number of GP trainees has fallen by 22 percent in five years and there are 14 GP principal posts vacant with another 18 retirements to come in the next year. Whether Steven Dorrell's exciting £2.75 million patient education campaign will help make general practice a half-bearable job again remains to be seen. Newly qualified doctors are not convinced.

● THE attraction of London as a place to be a GP is not helped by the fact that 22 percent of GPs in the capital are practising out of sub-standard and occasionally appalling premises with 30 percent less access to district nursing services than elsewhere in the country.

Very few of these practices would have been eligible for fundholding status even if they'd wanted to apply, providing further evidence that the scheme has just made rich practices richer while poor ones, in poor areas, fall down.

● THE number of GPs applying to become fundholders has fallen dramatically since last year. In the **north-west region**, applications are down from 262 to 50; in **Trent** from 116 to 46; and in **Wales**, 67 to 28. There has, however, been an upsurge in commissioning, where groups of practices get together, pool resources, cut down on bureaucracy and eliminate inequality. Quite why the government didn't introduce it in the first place is unclear.

● FUNDHOLDERS in **Sheffield** have negotiated some tremendous benefits for their patients. A fundholder's patient who needs a hip replacement has to wait just 12 weeks for the operation at the **Royal Hallamshire hospital**, whereas a non-fundholder's patient in equal pain would have to wait a year. Other relative discrepancies include ear services (eight weeks v. 43); neurology (14 v. 38); neurosurgery (9 v. 23); and cardiology (12 v. 26). As Dr John Russell, vice chairman of Sheffield's local medical committee, put it: "The figures don't surprise me. I'm sure the discrepancy exists nationally and doctors are aware of it."



● **Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge** — star of BBC1's **Hospital Watch** — has blocked all emergency admissions apart from 999 calls and blue light ambulances for 80 percent of the time since last October. As local GP Dr Gail Kenney says: "It's disgraceful. I cannot understand how a hospital the size of Addenbrooke's cannot take emergencies properly." The problem is not just due to the often quoted annual "11 percent rise in emergencies", but also because managers have been protecting beds to allow the treatment of more lucrative non-urgent patients and thus keep the government and their accountants sweet.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

SO MUCH for government undertakings that the Meat Hygiene Service — aka the Most Hated Service — would not whack up its charges after taking over meat inspection from local councils last year.

When Angela "Goldilocks" Browning, junior Maffia minister, launched the "service" last April, she took pains to reassure worried meat men and farmers. "As far as charges are concerned," she said, "we expect them to be no higher next year than they have been in the current financial year."

Only a few weeks ago Goldilocks was boasting to the Commons that the MHS was delivering an "efficiency gain" of 20 per cent and claiming that she would "keep the pressure up" for further improvements — ie reduced charges. But such is the double-dealing of the Maffia, it could almost be guaranteed that charges would rise. And sure enough, they have risen: the Most Hated Service has announced massive increases of up to 22 per cent for its "services" next year.

With profits in the meat trade at an all time low, industry reaction has been hostile. Their protests have not impressed MHS chief executive Johnston McNeil, however, who dismisses the outrage of his "customers" as "only to be expected". With a secure salary of £78,000 a year underwritten by the taxpayer, why should he worry?

DENIS BRINICOMBE is an enterprising company in Crediton, Devon, which for many years has sold a highly successful product called "Tub-Orf", which deals with a disease in sheep called "orf".

This is a highly contagious dermatitis which can be passed to humans, and it must be treated with some respect. But such is the zeal of our public safety guardians at the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), they cannot tolerate the thought of the cure being sold without a licence.

The cost of the licence — many thousands — plus the hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of tests needed to satisfy the VMD that the product works, are beyond the means of Brinicombe, and the firm was faced with discontinuing what is generally regarded as a highly effective remedy.

However, Brinicombe's directors found that as long as they make no actual claims for the product's role in dealing with any particular disease, they may continue selling it without a licence. So they have now removed the word "orf" from the label by the simple expedient using a new name, "Frobut" — none other than "Tub-Orf" spelt backwards.

The product remains exactly the same, and appreciative sheep farmers, who can still use their favoured remedy, are hugely enjoying the opportunity of telling the VMD to fuck orf, as it were, in such an imaginative way.

NOW the Moslem fasting period of Ramadan is over, the fatted lamb is much in demand among certain ethnic communities. To help out, the ever-obliging Maffia has changed the meat "hygiene" rules for them.

Under earlier European Union law, the relevant slaughterhouses were limited to slaughtering 200 lambs a week for "hygiene" reasons. Now, under revised laws, they can increase their "kill" to an unlimited amount to cope with the festivities so long as they do not exceed their annual quota of 20,000 animals.

Strangely this "religious exemption" has only been extended to lambs and kids which are ritually slaughtered without first being stunned. So what of traditional British butchers who are bound by strict rules on humane killing? Although they see sales of pork soar in the run-up to that lesser known "religious festival" called Christmas, they are not allowed the same — or any — exemption when they need to kill more pigs.

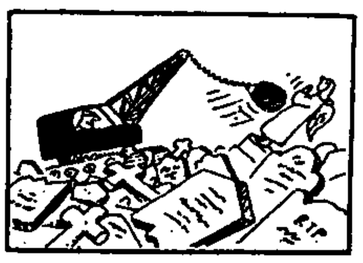
Still, one can hardly expect the Maffia to worry about double standards for the ethnic communities when it is so busy practising its own.

'New Muckspreader'

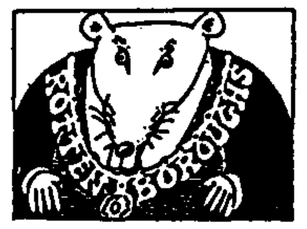
Old Macdonald

ALBERT

DOES WITHERING HALL HAVE A GHOST YOUR LORDSHIP?
WITHERING HALL
VISITORS
IT HAS THIRTY SIX GHOSTS YOUNG LADY!
GIANT CORKSCREW COLLAPSED LAST FRIDAY!



Rotten Borough Advertiser



TAKING THE RISE OUT OF LAZARUS

WESTMINSTER Tory councillor Edmund Lazarus's recent letter to the *Eye* regarding the neverending asbestos tower blocks story (*Eyes passim*) has not gone unchallenged.

Lazarus wrote that "no one [on Westminster council] ever denied the presence of asbestos at Hermes and Chantry Points... the real point is that environmental health officers carried out regular checks and always advised the council that there was no immediate danger to health."

According to Jonathan Rosenberg, from the estate's tenants' group, and Labour councillor Jill Selbourne, both of whom have written to the *Eye*, "this is completely untrue".

● In February 1983 a Westminster environmental health officer reported to the housing department that the "most potentially hazardous" use of asbestos was sprayed amosite in the lift lobbies on each floor and that the "extremely friable nature of this type of asbestos would indicate the necessity for removal of the asbestos as a matter of urgency".

● In March 1983 the director of environmental health expressed concern at "the level of loose asbestos at large which could present a health hazard to tenants".

● In July 1983 the GLC's medical adviser told Westminster he considered the situation in the lift lobbies to be "if not actually then certainly potentially hazardous to health".

● In November 1983 the GLC medical adviser claimed that "air leakage from the boxed-in asbestos-rich atmosphere around the steel was seen to be possible, release of free fibres into the dwellings therefore being possible".

It appears that none of this information was given to residents alongside the propaganda from the Tory council, nor was it given to the families who were moved into the estate in 1989 (and not into marginal wards where they might vote Labour). Then, the council also told tenants that "regular testing in the tower blocks confirms that there is no danger to health".

It also appears that Coun Lazarus's claims that the Barratt report into the controversy was thought up by Conservative councillors is a little disingenuous. John Barratt was originally commissioned by the chief executive to examine complaints raised by Labour councillors that the council had engaged in a "dirty tricks" campaign against the residents' group.

IN BRIEF

GOOLE: Labour has its own fat cat public servants: Michael Wheaton, chief exec of the parish council, earns £71,000 — about £50,000 more than the recommended figure for councils with populations of 20,000. Wheaton is a Labour county councillor on about-to-be-abolished Humberside, which he used to lead. The district auditor asked Goole why it pays Wheaton so much; it doesn't know. Labour leader Mick Armitage admitted there was no document recording his last £27,000 pay rise.

BEVERLEY: The town is about to be spoilt by a 53,000 sq ft Safeway supermarket — with consent for its biggest-ever planning issue going ahead on 12 March and the council being abolished on 31 March! Power will pass to East Riding council, which the Tories won't control. Very democratic.

TOWER HAMLETS: Auditors want to know why £4.3 million has "gone missing" from the housing department's 89/90 accounts. The money relates to the auction of land and property, including some in the Globe Town neighbourhood, one of a handful of self-contained Hamlet-ettes set up by the then Liberal-run council in the 80s. Shortly before the 1990 elections the Liberals liberally moved money between accounts to create vote-winning schemes.

PRESTON: After the Operation Angel property corruption inquiry, it will cost Preston £600,000 to pay off chief executive Geoff Driver, who quit after finding it impossible to work within new guidelines requiring him to report back to councillors every hour. A few months ago he had been single-handedly cleaning up the town, dealing directly with Knacker and bypassing Labour councillors, some of whose colleagues had been implicated. When Labour leaders found out they didn't give Driver more help — they suspended him. Now they want a chief exec who won't ask too many questions.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE: Despite the financial crisis across Scotland, Labour's new authority has announced that 30 of its senior officials will have free use of leased BMWs and 4x4 jeeps costing taxpayers £500,000.

FULL HOUSE IN LAMBETH

THE task of turning round Lambeth's shambolic housing department will fall to John Broomfield, the current Southwark housing boss who becomes London's highest paid housing director when he starts his new job on April fool's day.

He will be greeted by familiar faces: former Southwark colleagues John Wintour and Christopher Lee, who arrived in Lambeth before him and will be his deputies.

Between them Wintour and Lee look after Lambeth's estate management contracts, Wintour taking care of the contractors and Lee the "clients". Unfortunately, absurd rumours persist at Lambeth town hall that Broomfield, Lee and Wintour were given six months to find new jobs by Southwark, and that the reason Lee and Wintour were appointed before their boss was so that no one could claim Broomfield was allowed to bring his own staff with him.

Lambeth residents will be hoping that the cost of employing the trio – £200,000 p.a. – is worth it. But Broomfield's record in Southwark is not encouraging.

Council tenants there owe a whopping £20 million in rent arrears to the council, and a recent internal audit report suggests that illegal sub-letting is rampant. A random check of 400 council flats revealed that a quarter were occupied by people other than the legal tenant. With alarm bells ringing a full audit of the borough's 46,000 properties has been ordered to determine the extent of the scam.

Housing benefit fraud was also up by 25 percent last year, which Southwark's auditors reckon cost the council £2 million.

On top of everything else, the "transfer" of Broomfield to join his buddies in Lambeth will be marked by a simultaneous strike by housing workers in both Lambeth and Southwark. Lambeth workers are disgruntled and say Wintour has stitched them up by changing their contracts of employment; Southwark workers are protesting at the 30 percent staff cut they face and that Broomfield, Wintour and Lee have walked away from the shambles they helped create.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

THE glorious career of Lib Dem councillor Mark Morgan as mayor of Brecon has been shortlived after he became tired and emotional following his swearing-in ceremony.

The celebration in the garrison town's working men's club degenerated into a verbal punch-up with his wife Trish, who marked the occasion by pouring her drink over His Worship. The row then continued in the high street, prompting Major Quinton Adams to write to the council claiming that the pair behaved "like fish wives".

Morgan swiftly handed in the chain of office and is concentrating on his day job as a civilian security guard at Brecon barracks.

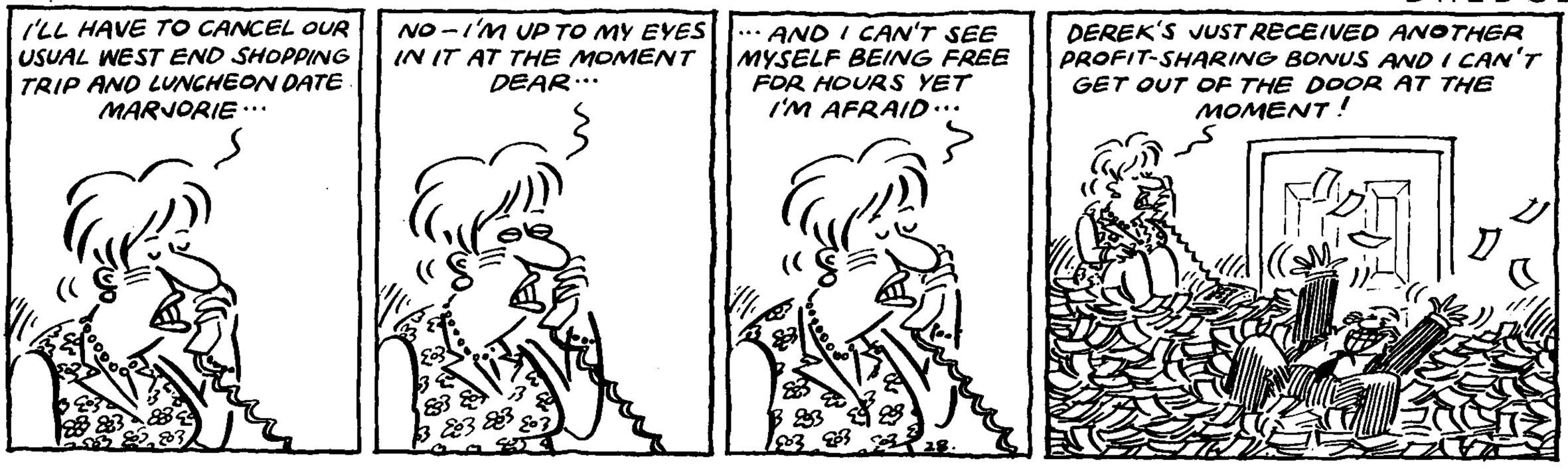
LIBRARY NEWS

SO, farewell then Mill Road Library in Cambridge, victim of local authority cuts. Although the council's Labour members claim to want to improve information by installing internet access in schools and libraries, and the Liberal Democrats claim education is their first priority, their pro-education stance doesn't run to keeping a vibrant community library open.

The council says the library is expensive, not well regarded and not well-used. But a survey found that 50 per cent of locals do use it; and 20 other Cambridgeshire libraries lend fewer books than Mill House. Mill House also has a larger percentage increase in use by children and a smaller percentage decline in lending in other areas than any of its rivals.

DIRECTORS WIVES

DREDGE


I'LL HAVE TO CANCEL OUR USUAL WEST END SHOPPING TRIP AND LUNCHEON DATE MARJORIE···
NO – I'M UP TO MY EYES IN IT AT THE MOMENT DEAR···
··· AND I CAN'T SEE MYSELF BEING FREE FOR HOURS YET I'M AFRAID···
DEREK'S JUST RECEIVED ANOTHER PROFIT-SHARING BONUS AND I CAN'T GET OUT OF THE DOOR AT THE MOMENT!

Letters

Uranium & Uranium Men

MANY thanks to the record number of educated readers who wrote in to abuse I.D. Metcalfe over his (or her) letter ("Metal Fatigue") about uranium-tipped shells. Metcalfe was, it seems, a little off beam.

***J. Livingston** from Fife said Mr (or Ms) Metcalfe was "talking rubbish". Or as **Paul Evans** wrote from cyberspace: "Pardon me, but your correspondent was talking what I believe is technically known by Radiation Physicists as 'bollocks'. Naturally occurring uranium consists of 99.3 percent U238 and 0.7 percent U235. The U235 is concentrated to make reactor fuel rods (3 percent) or bomb material (90 percent). There is no such thing as naturally occurring U234 — it might exist as a very short lived isotope. The material left after concentrating the U235 is 'depleted uranium' — uranium with a lower than natural concentration of U235. U238 is radioactive, just in a different way to U235".*

***John Bunyan** of Alresford in Hampshire gave short shrift to other Metcalfe claims. "The assertion that the German Wehrmacht relied totally on uranium for its armour piercing capabilities is ill-informed crap."*

*Among many others, **Peter Morwood** from co Wicklow had something to say on second world war armour-piercing rounds. "They were **not** 'normally made from tungsten'. They were more usually explosive shells with ballistic caps, or variants of sub-calibre shot with steel cores. Tungsten-cored shot was uncommon on both sides, though very much more so in the German forces. But German tungsten-cored ammunition (PzGr 40) did exist. Uranium-cored ones did not."*

Thank you to the hundreds of other specialists whose letters were too boring to print, and apologies also to the numerous fans of CHANNEL FOUR NEWS. *Further thanks are due for the replies to questions about the relative performance in grand prix races of Michael Schumacher and his Benetton team-mate Johnny Herbert. Readers point out that Schumacher is a better driver than Herbert; the car is built to Schumacher's specification; Schumacher gets preference in testing, set-ups and pit stops; and Benetton are superb race strategists, etc.*

Brownie points

Sir,

Re: James Brown Diary (9 Feb). My name is Gaynor Clarke and I work as a personal assistant to James Brown at LOADED *magazine — but not that personal.*

Ah, Venice. An interesting thought, but I'd really be scraping the barrel. For me, Creme de Menthe is the very last resort. I rest my case.

Yours sincerely,
GAYNOR CLARKE,
loaded magazine.

Peek viewing

Sir,

If Supt Ray Pierce of Hong Kong police (Funny Old World, 892) had had the benefit of reading the front page of the HAM AND HIGH *of 9 February, he would have known what charge to bring against the hapless Shau Kei Wan, for the crime of video-taping the interior contents of a lady's skirt.*

The HAM AND HIGH *records that one Peter Petrou of Muswell Hill was caught doing exactly the same thing in Muswell Hill and was charged with "intentional harassment" under the public order act, for which "defendants can be imprisoned for up to six months".*

In Petrou's case the magistrate (no doubt taking into account the fact that his exclusive hairdressing business here in Belsize Village was celebrating its 10th anniversary that very day) only sentenced him to two years probation, saying (apparently): "I want to give you an opportunity to accept help and take help."

I can't help wondering what Pete Murray made of it all. His signed photograph is proudly displayed for all to see on the walls of Petrou's "exclusive salon" — I've seen it. Yes, Petrou once cut my hair. Exclusive? It was rubbish, that haircut.

Yours, safely in trousers,
KEVIN DOBSON,
London NW3.

Grandpater familias

Sir,

As I am sure you appreciate, espionage within the fashion industry is rife. Accordingly, we guard rigorously the publication of our new designs prior to their official launch.

Unfortunately, it has come to my attention that a photograph taken at a modelling session for our GROOVY GRANDAD, *summer 1996, range has come into your possession.*

I must warn you that if this photograph is published again, I will have no hesitation in suing your disgusting organ.

Yours faithfully,
LAURIE VAN CARR,
Never Too Old Fashions, London SE1.

Lookalike

Jarvis Cocker

David Mellor

Sir,

While watching Jarvis Cocker's show-stopping appearance at the Brit Awards, I was struck by his remarkable resemblance to sports presenter David Mellor. Could they by any chance be related?

ENA B. JACKSON,
Gary, Indiana.

Underfired

Sir,

Street of Shame is incorrect in reporting (EYE *892) that I was fired personally by the editor of the* EVENING STANDARD. *The news was broken to me (as gently as it is possible to be in such circumstances) by my friend and colleague David Ofield, the picture editor.*

This is important. The fact is that the editor did not know who I was when he sacked me. When he found out he was reportedly furious.

As Richard Littlejohn would say, you couldn't make it up!

Yours,
GUY SIMPSON,
Ex-Evening Standard.

Job descriptions

Sir,

I have not for many years applied for any job at THE TIMES, *nor have I ever applied for the City editorship of the* MAIL ON SUNDAY *or any other job on that newspaper. In the case of the* SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *City editorship, it was the* SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *that approached me as I am sure Charles Moore, then editor, will confirm.*

As to my salary, it is lamentably not as you report it. I think a correction is in order.

Yours sincerely,
JEREMY WARNER,
The Independent.

Spring fever

Sir,

Would the "Letter from Dublin" (EYE, *23 Feb) by any chance have emanated from a Fianna Fáil/Sinn Féin source? The reason I ask is not only because of the pan-nationalist special pleading throughout, but because of a huge whopper in the text.*

Dick Spring did not force Albert Reynolds to resign. Fianna Fáil gave Albert the push when he became a liability, enabling Fianna Fáil to cling on to power with the selfsame Spring. (As it happened, the deal collapsed, but that's another story.)

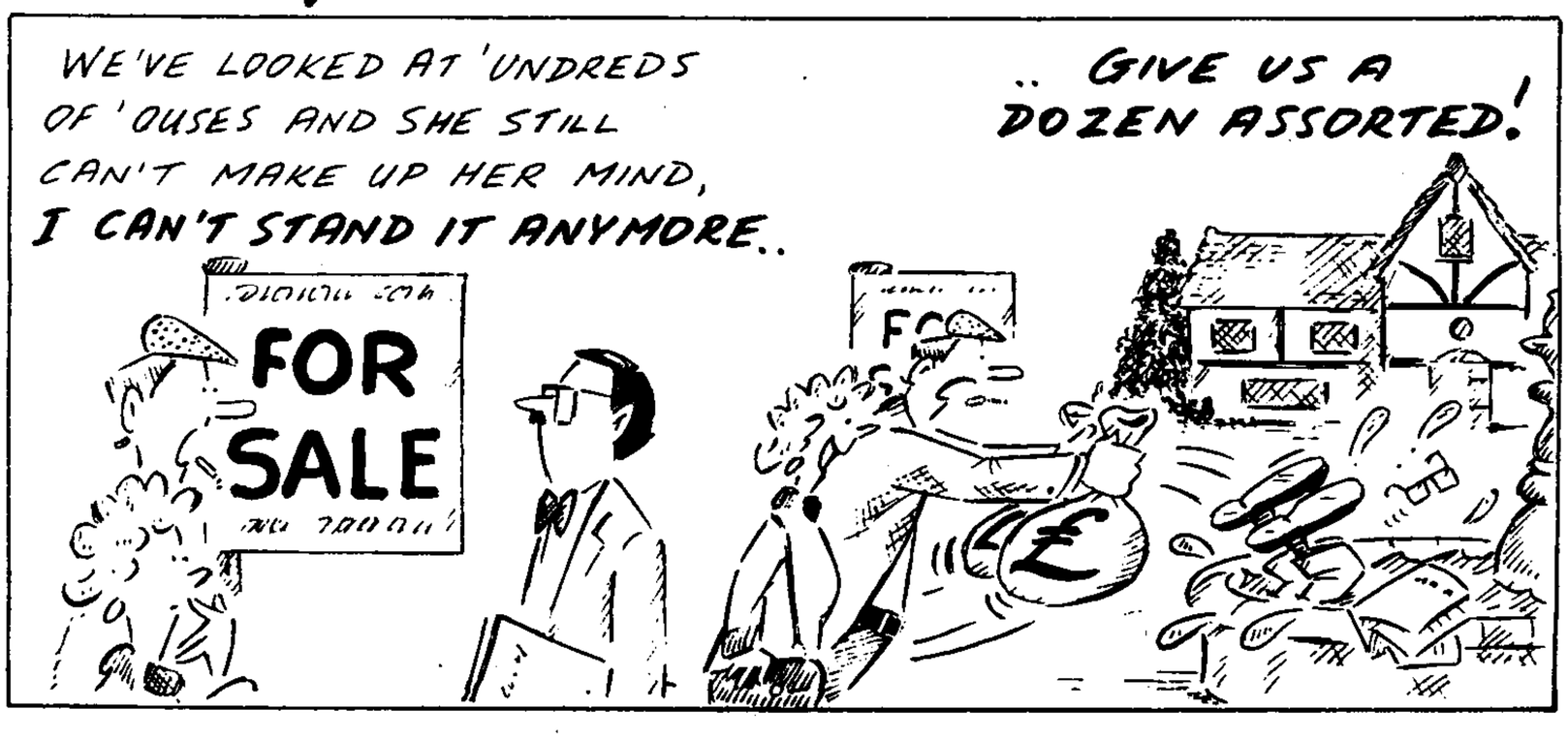
It is true that John Bruton does not seek to paint himself as a rabid Irish nationalist. That is because he is prime minister of a democratic country with a pluralist constitution. Given that the ultimate deal will have to be done with the Unionists I would have thought it made sense for senior politicians in the Republic to understand their world view.

*As for De Rossa, the fact that he himself has made the transition from a paramilitary background into constitutional politics (unaided by John Hume, Bill Clinton, Edna O'Brien et al) gives him **more** rather than less authority to comment on Sinn Féin shiftiness in this regard.*

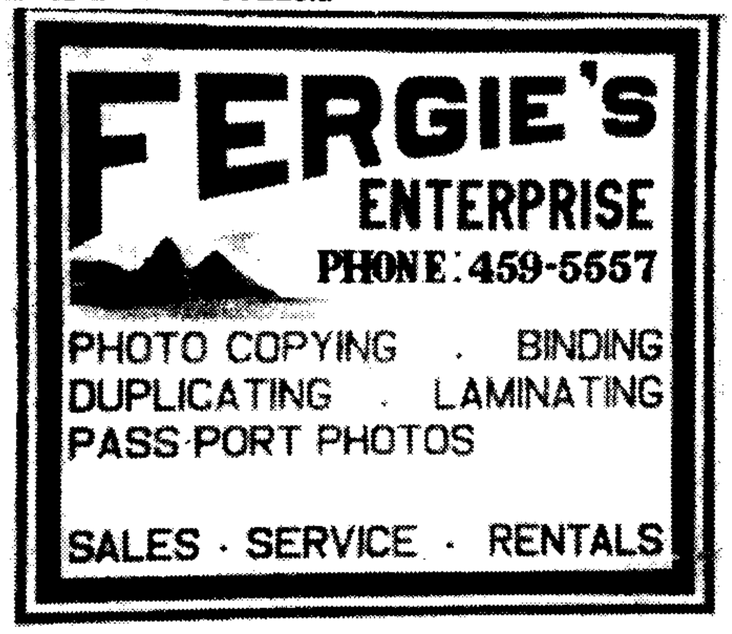
Yours sincerely,
MARTIN WHELAN,
Dublin 2.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER


WE'VE LOOKED AT 'UNDREDS OF 'OUSES AND SHE STILL CAN'T MAKE UP HER MIND, I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE..
FOR SALE
.. GIVE US A DOZEN ASSORTED!

I-SPY *St Lucia*



Submitted by John Davey Beverton. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Unreliable sauce

Sir,

Backbiter's sniper attack on the government's Northern Irish peace advertising campaign is not so much brown sauce as brown tosh. Your facts are all wrong.

Firstly, the campaign did not cost anywhere near £3.3 million, despite attracting worldwide publicity.

Secondly, the research evidence, in the possession of government, proves profound attitude change and massive public favourability across all communities to the campaign. The theme line — "Wouldn't it be great if it was like this all the time" — has become a ubiquitous catchphrase for peace.

Finally, there never was a poster about Crossmaglen changed to, er, Happymaglen. Your informant ripped you off with that titbit of fiction. Wouldn't it be great if Backbiter and PRIVATE EYE *could get their facts right?*

Yours sincerely,
DAVID LYLE,
Chief Executive, McCann-Erickson Belfast.

Sir,

I don't know who's stringing for Backbiter (23 Feb) from "Norn Iron" these days but you really should get him or her to file before lunch.

The "Time For The Bright Side" campaign finished, as planned, at the same time as President Clinton's visit in November 1995: that's when we'd spent the allocated budget — it had nothing to do with the ending of the IRA ceasefire this month.

The campaign cost £1.2 million (split roughly half and half between production costs and airtime costs) not the £3.3 million you allege.

We never had a poster which changed "Crossmaglen" to "Happymaglen". True, some of the posters in this vein didn't go down too well with those few who'd had the "humour bypass" op. But the five TV ads which formed the main element of "Time For The Bright Side" were big hits.

Wouldn't it be great if you checked your "stories" all the time?!

Yours,
A WOOD,
Director, Information Services, Stormont Castle, Belfast.

The Knibb of the matter

Sir,

Re: Defamatory remarks — PRIVATE EYE *891, 9 Feb. I refer to the above issue in which defamatory remarks were made about me at page 6.*

I was extremely concerned to read in an article entitled "New Labour Girls — Maria Eagle" that "Rubbing it in, Militant Labour Councillor George Knibb brandished a letter..."

I am not, and never have been a member of or associated with the Militant Tendency and I am certainly not a "Militant Councillor". I am the leader of the Independent Liverpool Labour Group within the city council. Not only am I unassociated with Militant, but so is the Liverpool Labour group under whose banner I stand.

Yours faithfully,
CLLR G. KNIBB,
Liverpool.

Shop talk

Sir,

My client Patricia Hewitt has asked me to bring to the attention of your readers an inaccuracy in your piece about her in the last EYE.

It is true that she is allowing her name to go forward for nomination as Labour candidate in the Leicester West constituency where she has friends and family. It is not true that she is seeking selection in any other constituency.

Your readers will be glad to be reassured that she is not so "desperate to find a safe Labour seat" that she is "shopping around".

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY BINDMAN,
Bindman & Partners Solicitors.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Christmas is far too commercial, and toilet paper with Father Christmas on it is scraping the bottom..."

Radio 4
(Toby Hoskins)

"Ericsson's record is second to none in the RAC Rally — he's been second three times."

Mitsubishi Motors Spokesman, BBC1
(John Marshman)

"He may yet pull this team from the edge of the cliff by the scruff of its neck into the land of milk and honey."

JONATHAN HAYWARD in Wolverhampton Wanderers programme
(Terry)

"The difference between Page 3 and men's magazines is a big yawning chasm..."

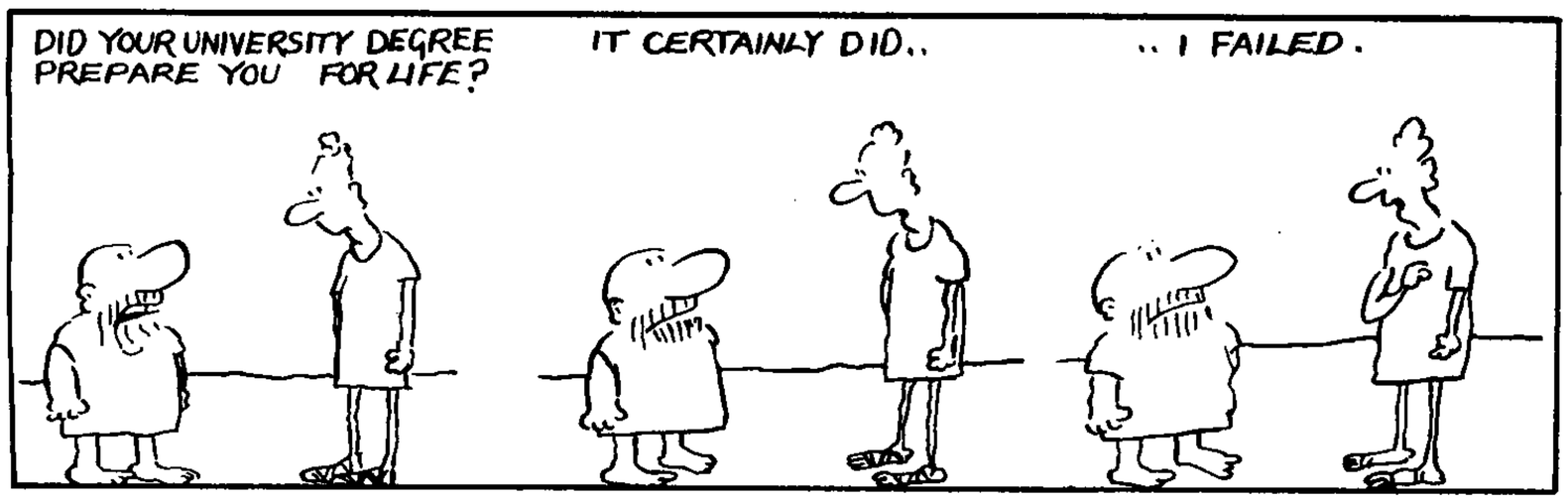
TRACEY ELVICK, BBC2
(Tony McIlwrath)

Clive Warren: *What do you do for a living?*
Caller: *I'm a jumper presser.*
Clive Warren: *What does that involve?*
Caller: *Pressing jumpers*

Radio 1
(Steve Holdsworth)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



FOCUS ON PUNCH

SO it's official: the world's worst columnist is to edit the world's worst magazine. Peter McHackey, lured by Mohammed Fayed to resurrect *Punch*, a journal much enjoyed by the dental profession, is to be paid a pittance of £150,000.

As McKay would put it: isn't life grand?

Er, perhaps not. His only previous experience of editorship was at *Sunday Today*, which promptly keeled over and died.

At Al-Fayed's new publishing company, modestly entitled Liberty, McHackey will be teaming up with two of his ex-bosses, Mike Molloy and Stewart Steven. But before these three old Fleet Street lags congratulate themselves on their good fortune, they should reflect on the way the phoney Pharaoh treated another of his senior employees — Christoph Bettermann, the former deputy chairman of Harrods and chairman of Harrods Estates.

Bettermann, a German lawyer, resigned from Horrids in June 1991 after discovering that Fayed was bugging his private telephone calls. He received a settlement of $160,000 for the loss of his job, but Fayed threatened that if Bettermann was to move back to the Middle East, where he had previously run a marine services company, he would destroy him.

When Bettermann ignored the threat and accepted a job in Sharjah, Fayed duly wrote to the country's ruler, Sheik Al Qasimi, blackening his old colleague's name. "I fired Christoph from the company," Fayed wrote, "due to his dishonesty and his abuse of position in running the company by embezzling millions of pounds from the company."

Fayed then began civil and criminal proceedings in Dubai against Bettermann, who was by then head of Crescent Petroleum. The hapless German was summoned by police, interrogated, stripped of his passport and told he must provide financial guarantees to avoid going to jail. Two years later he appeared in court to answer the charges from behind the bars of an iron cage. After some 25 court appearances, all charges were dropped and Bettermann was freed.

But Fayed didn't give up. He took the case to appeal, still insisting Bettermann had stolen $900,000 of his company's money. Luckily, m'learned friends in Sharjah dismissed the appeal.

Back in Britain Bettermann sued for libel, claiming that Fayed had fabricated the allegations "as part of a wicked scheme to exact a cruel revenge upon the plaintiff for his resignation from the Al Fayed Group." Rather than face an embarrassing cross-examination, Fayed offered a settlement of £150,000, which Bettermann accepted — but not before a statement was read out in court on 16 February by Fayed's counsel which conceded that Bettermann had never been guilty of embezzlement or fraud.

There is much more to it than that, of course. In refusing to defend Bettermann's action, Fayed implicitly admits that he not only bugged one of his most senior executives but that he later tried to have him thrown into jail on a charge he accepts is entirely false. Small wonder he preferred to settle rather than have the full details aired at the moment he and his brother were challenging home secretary Michael Howard's decision to deny them British citizenship.

The pursuit of Bettermann is reckoned to have cost Fayed £1 million, but his legal travails are not over. He is still pursuing a libel suit against *Vanity Fair* magazine over an article which was published last summer. The mag shows no sign of backing down, and its solicitors are eagerly searching out former Harrods employees to support allegations about bugging, sexual harassment and many other interesting activities.

Messrs McKay, Molloy and Steven are in no danger of being subjected to sexual harassment. But, as they settle into their magnificent new offices in Knightsbridge, they should be careful what they say on the phone.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY
Victor Lewis-Smith

● "I'm telling you it's true. The facts of this matter are simple," Dr Huang Si-ming announced to reporters at Hong Kong's University of Science and Technology. "The US Government has secretly implanted a device in my teeth to control my mind, and that is why I am filing a writ against them for $100,000,000."

Dr Huang went on to explain the circumstances that gave rise to his claim. "While undergoing root canal work at the University of Iowa in 1991, the device was secretly implanted in my teeth by a CIA dentist, so the government could trace me and find out if I was involved in criminal activity. It caused me to lose my memory, and I was sacked from my lecturing job. The device can read my thoughts and damage my career, and the mind controllers talks to my mind when I am asleep. It also acts like a video camera, sending pictures of what I see to a receiver for recording. In fact, I suspect there are two mind controllers in my teeth.

"It can also manipulate my thoughts and provoke bad behaviour like murder or visiting a prostitute. I now have bad breath and possibly foot-rot. If I am offered my job back at the university, I would be prepared to withdraw my writ. Thank you." (*South China Morning Post, 25/1/96. Spotter — Caroline Nicholas)*

—●—

● "The judges were stunned when contestant number 5 produced a live chicken from beneath her dress and chopped its head off as part of her dance routine," John Dikkenburg told readers of his *Manila Notebook* column. "But, after huddling around the official table for some time, they gave her a maximum 10 for Originality, and zero for Relevance."

Dikkenburg had recently attended a beauty contest in Tarlac, the winner of which would represent the Luzon district in the annual Miss Philippines contest. "For a while, it seemed that number 5 would win the nomination, but she had reckoned with-

out *babaing gubat*, a jungle woman who dressed as an Amazon. This woman also brought a live chicken onto the stage and, looking daggers at number 5, delved into its abdomen with her bare hands, and then calmly and with great relish began to devour the chicken's innards, in a defiant show of one-upmanship.

"One of the judges — Colonel Doroteo Reyes, the Tarlac police chief — was seen to catapult from the official table at this point and bolt into the night. The contest was declared a draw, although judges said the jungle woman would have won, if only she had scored better in the evening gown section." *(Hong Kong Sunday Morning Post, 4/2/96. Spotter — S.J. Ford)*

—●—

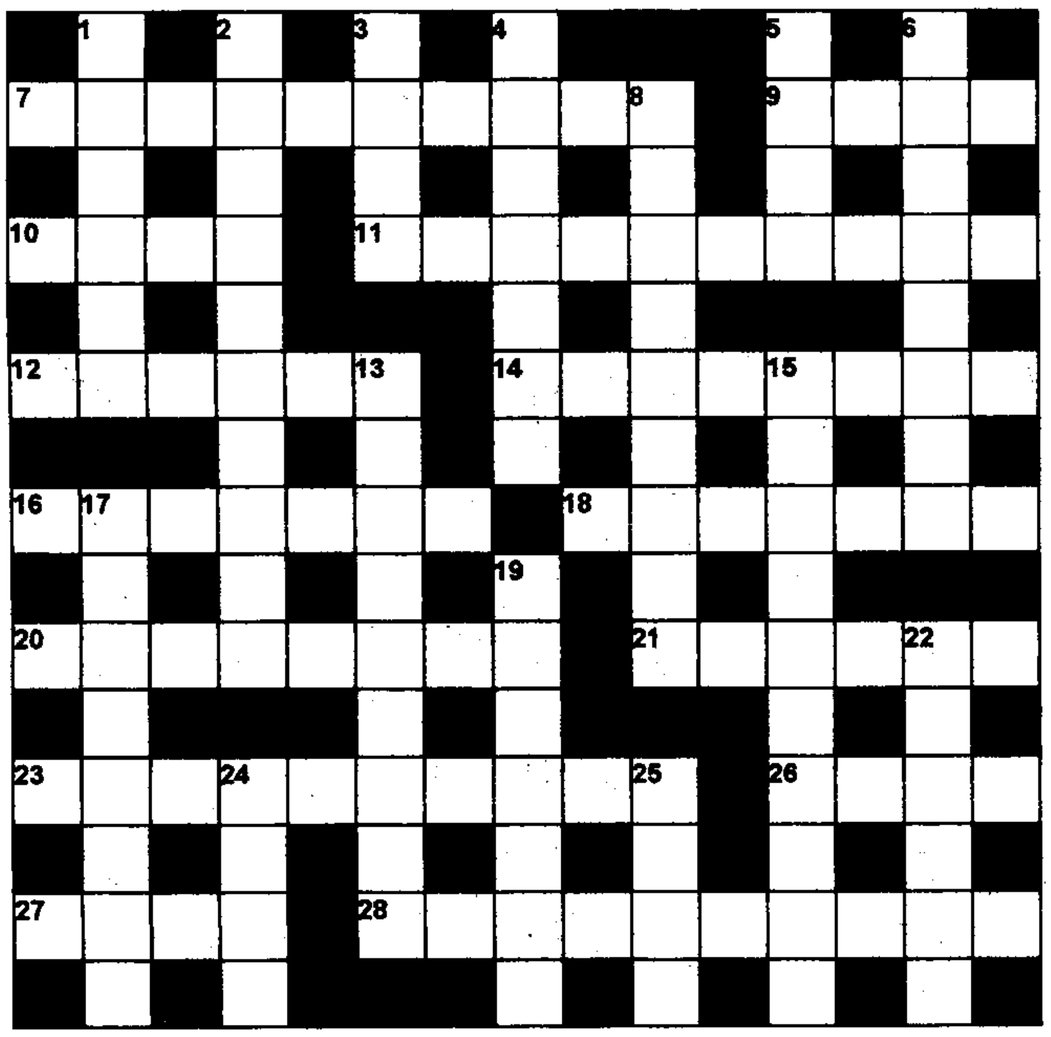
● *"If you want six hundred blind people urinating up the walls of your television centre, so be it," Kim Hyun Keuk told executives of the Munwha Broadcasting Centre in Seoul. "I am arranging this protest because I represent Anma, a fine organisation which is the only means of making a living for the blind in this country. Your programme suggests that we are helpers are prostitutes. Consequently, I have arranged for blind anmasa to start pissing in protest."*

Kim, director of the Association of Korean Traditional Massage (anma), was leading a "stink" protest against the MBC. "Our profession is legally open only to the blind, and we uphold traditional standards of massage. But an estimated one million sighted people illegally engage in irregular business at massage parlours, offering sexual favours for money. Tonight, MBC's programme, Producer's Note, will claim that we are all prostitutes. This is a lie. Retract at once, or we shall open our bladders and commence action."

Shortly afterwards, six hundred angry male and female anmasa lined up against a wall at the tv station, and relieved themselves en masse in broad daylight. Nevertheless, MBC broadcast the programme. (Eastern Express, 24/1/96. Spotter — George H. Adams)

EYE CROSSWORD 48 by Cyclops

£100 Winner SIMON LEIGH



ACROSS

7 Regular viewers of one of our contributors? (6,4)
9 Engaged in fellatio — wanton state (4)
10 Spring version of Eye? (4)
11 Nut accepted good telling-off (10)
12 Empty Tory bluster from a bullying leader (6)
14 Corporation wants grass to protrude (3-5)
16 Footing the bill for frolic by Duchess initially? Not out of $1000! (7)
18 To arouse member could kill someone (7)
20 Gets naked — that's the Princess's habit (8)
21 Exercise for the troops — one mark of Paula? (6)
23 The time it takes to develop interest — not in Cuba's revolution (10)
26 Back a bum,... (4)
27 ...dog-eared, American journalist (4)
28 What Major's lot would dearly love: to stagger on etc. pathetically with no one doing a U-turn (2-8)

DOWN

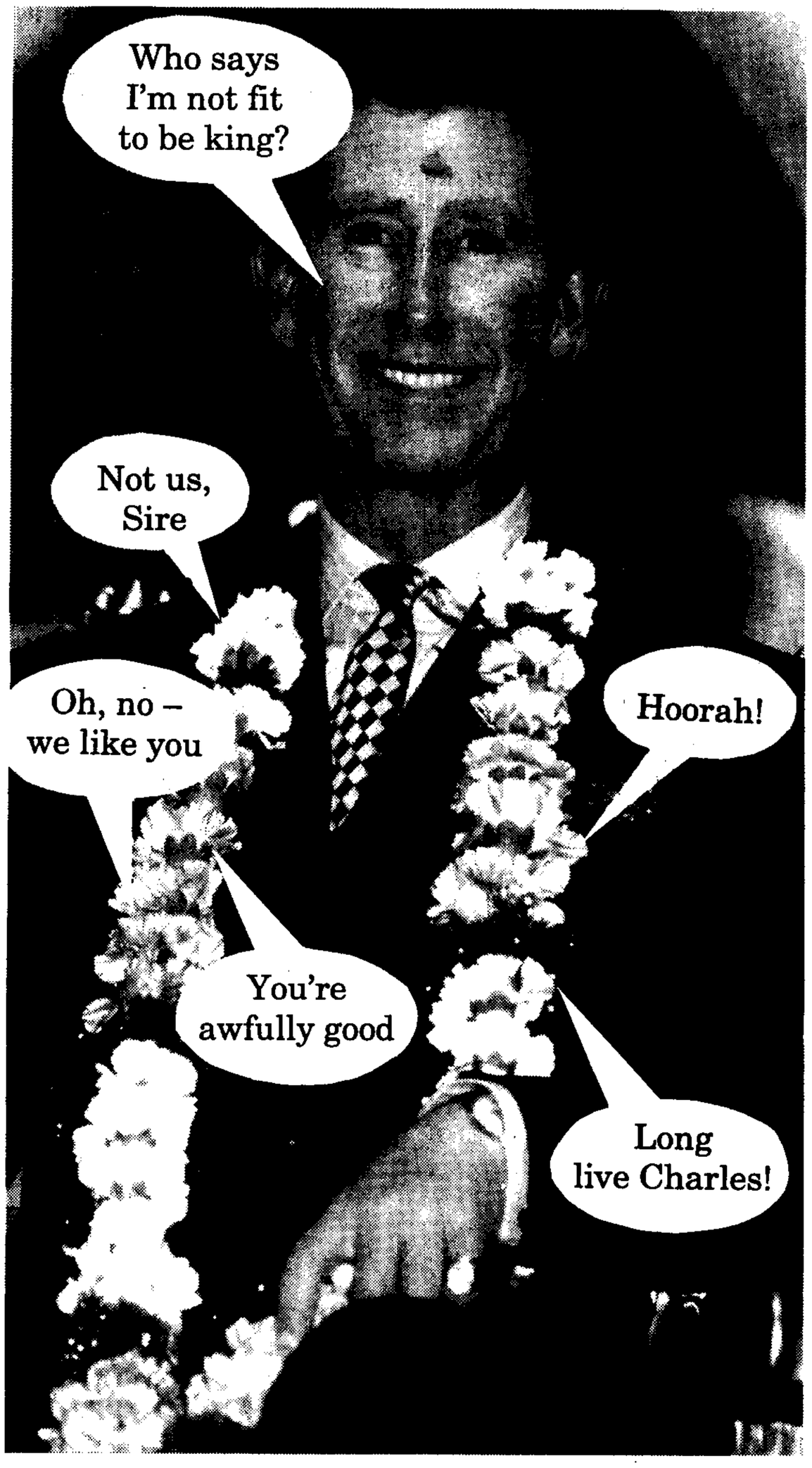
1 Luvvie's association a sort of natural justice? (6)
2 Brenda's after a shot, so bung! (10)
3 Bastard leader on the buzzer backing up a broadcaster (4)
4 City centre abandoned by Conservative cuts made by yours truly (7)
5 Crooked dealer's familiar cut (4)
6 Mixing with Left and Right, Edwina's a deposed impostor (8)
8 Clare has inclination to put a candidate in the running (9)
13 Dithering oily brat — name this politician! (4,5)
15 Elite circle reckon they're the ones who put Major's lot in power (10)
17 Copulation with Ireland's leading character and man of virtue, Ian Paisley? (8)
19 Outdated court prat swallows what's supposedly unimportant (7)
22 Sitting in for a tory tub-thumper (6)
24 Start to remove clothing and seduce someone the old-fashioned way (4)
25 Complete lack of character, we hear, this pisspoor TV show host (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 15.03.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 47

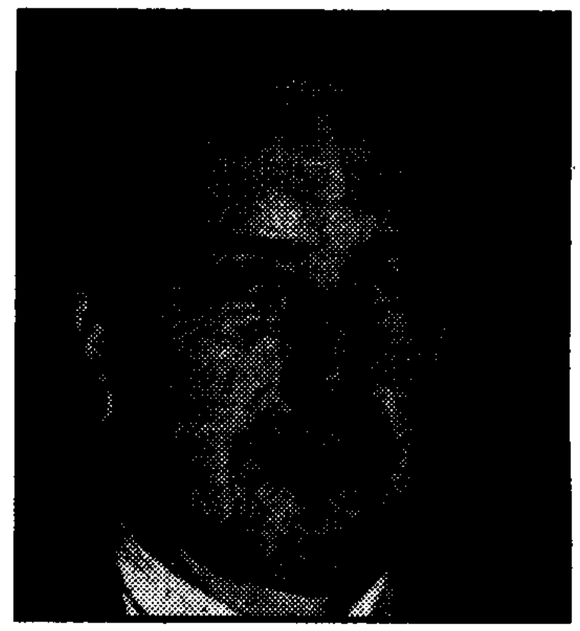
ACROSS: 7 Diadem 9 Tsarina 10 Commoner 11 Crotch 12 Phoney 13 Princess 15 Queen of Hearts 17 Literacy 18 Climax 20 Blades 22 Chequers 23 Neutral 24 Paunch.

DOWN: 1 Kibosh 2 Adam and Eve 3 Stir 4 War crime 5 Giro 6 Narcosis 8 Monty 13 Puffy 14 Curriculum 15 Quisling 16 Noah's Ark 18 Creep 19 Africa 21 D-cup 22 Cult.



IS THIS MAN FIT TO BE IN THE SHADOW CABINET?

by Our Court Staff **Anthony Put-on-Holden**



A HUGE row blew up yesterday when a member of the Shadow Cabinet, Mr Ron Nobody, made a sensational speech on Hospital Radio Aberystwyth's Travel Show in which he described the Prince of Wales as a bit of a Kinnock. *(Shurely 'Pillock'? Ed.)*

Immediately the switchboard was jammed by irate patients demanding that Mr Nobody should "resign" or at the very least "kill himself at once".

Tory MPs joined in the chorus of disapproval calling the incident "the most shameful day in the history of world politics".

Said Sir Bufton Owen-Tufton, the Conservative MP for Bedwetty South: "The constitutional role of a member of the Shadow Cabinet is to keep out of politics, to attend state functions such as the opening of parliament and to confine himself to messages of support for his leader."

Blair de Loon

Another senior Conservative, Mr Tony Blair, agreed. "The Labour Party is a cherished national institution, but it can only survive if its members behave with due decorum, ie, do what I tell them at all times."

A spokesman for Prince Charles said: "One has to worry about Mr Nobody's sanity. There he is talking to himself on radio, giving speeches on subjects he knows nothing about and getting into bed with the Republicans. Next thing he'll be wishing he was a tampax floating down the toilet."

Ron Nobody is 59.

ADVERTISEMENT

St Cakes School

A fee-paying Independent School set in the rolling countryside of the West Midlands, perfect school-run distance for Labour constituencies.
Headmaster: R. Kipling.
Motto: Quis Emptit Entrat (Who Pays Gets In).

The following awards will be made this year:

The **Tony Blair** Memorial Scholarship: open to the deserving children of members of the Labour Party.

The **Harriet Harman** Closed Exhibition: available only to those pupils with two single-parents both in the Labour Party.

The **Er... David Spart** Comradeship Award: basically open to those on the extreme left, er... who are trying to totally change the system from within, ie by infiltrating the elitist institutions, eg St Cakes and demanding a parity of opportunity for the underclass, er...

Apply in writing to the Bursar:
Wing Commander C.J.P. Zhirinovsky, The Old Bunker, St Cakes School, Lycett Green, Lincs M40, Exit 7.
(Just beyond Scratchwood Services)

Punch Caption Competition

The following photograph originally appeared in the Daily Telegraph on 4 March 1996. The original caption read **New: Punch executives (front) Stewart Steven and Peter McKay with John Dux and Mike Molloy.**

Readers are invited to supply an amusing caption of their own.

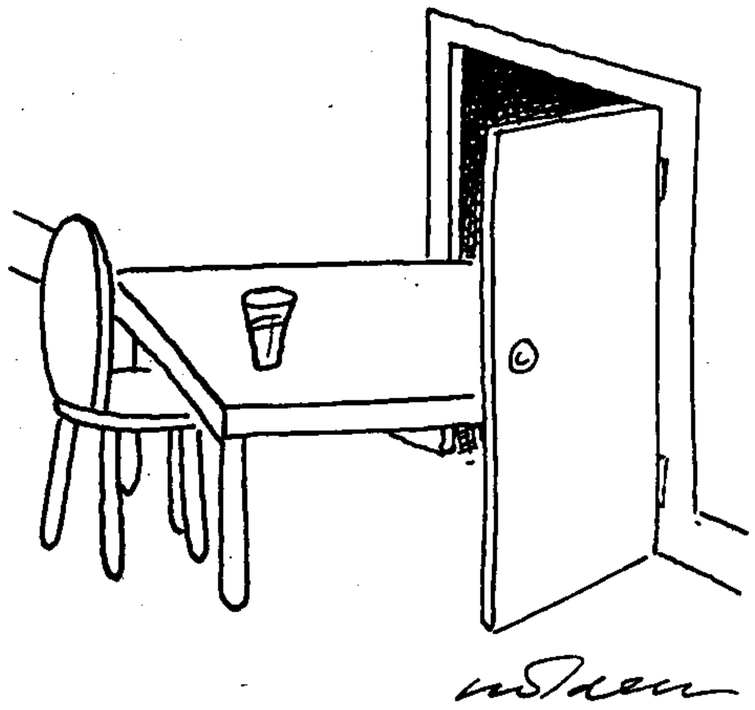
The winner will receive a Harrods Voucher and a subscription to Dempsters Magazine.

Closing date (for Punch): Just after 2nd issue.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Sunday

I am not in any small measure inconsiderably bloody annoyed with someone called Mr Thurdman. He is an MP who is the third man to resign from my party, except that one of the others was a woman, not *that* woman but the other woman whom I never mention, viz. Emma Nicholson. Since my majority is now down to one (owing to circumstances out of my control, ie so many people resigning from my party because they think I am useless, which of course I am not, oh no) it is obviously very important that I keep Mr Thurdman on my side. I therefore invited him to tea to discuss his political future. I was somewhat surprised with his wife Mrs Thurdman, who seemed to be very cross and started shouting at me. "How dare you treat Peter like this, after he has voted



for you so loyally all these years!" she screamed. "Let us be calm about this," I said in my special soothing-bad-tempered-wives' voice that I have had on occasion to use even in my own home! "Would you like one of these delicious peerages — I mean biscuits?" I asked, dropping a rather subtle hint. "But I thought in your new, classless society, you didn't give biscuits for political services?" Mr Thurdman replied. "We do not, Lord Thurdman," I countered. "But I have so admired your decision to vote for me in the Scott debate tomorrow that I am going to make an exception in your case, and give you this biscuit." Unfortunately, his wife interrupted at this point, shouting: "You cannot fob off my Peter with a mere biscuit! He deserves a peerage at the very least".

Monday

Today was a very historic day, perhaps surpassing all other days in its historicness. Everyone said I was finished. But, oh no. I not only survived but I have won a complete and total victory over all the other parties combined. This was the historic score, which I shall never forget:

J. Major's Team 320

The Rest of the World 319.

Winner J. Major, as per usual! A line has now been drawn under the Scott Report and everyone accepts that none of us did anything wrong, except perhaps Mr Waldegrave. We did not sell arms to Iraq, and if we did, we did not know we were doing. We did not try to send innocent men to prison, and if we did, we did it in good faith. All my friend Mr Lang had to do was keep repeating this in the debate, and poor Mr Cook was completely speechless. All he could do was make a long, dull speech, listing all the lies we had told and trying to pretend we had meant to tell them. Everyone was very bored with this and cheered wildly at the end with relief that he had finished.

Fortunately, the debate made no difference at all to the vote which was a complete triumph, as I may already have mentioned.

Let one thing be clear! I won this vote fair and square on the issue of Mr Scott saying that we only lied in good faith. Whatever the lefties at the BBC and Telegraph are saying, I did not have to do any deals with anyone, including Mr Thurdman, Mr Allason or Mr Paisley, whose three votes coincidentally secured my victory. Even Mrs Thatcher agreed that I had done nothing wrong, which shows that we must have been right. I might change my mind and mention her just his once.

Tuesday

Following my Scott triumph, my other main policy, ie my peace process, is also firmly back on track. Not that it has ever been off track, oh no. This morning Mr Bruton and I had a historic telephone conversation in which we agreed the following:

1. We will not be bombed to the conference table.
2. We must get to the conference table as soon as possible.
3. We have set a date for the conference of 24 May.
4. We hope this will now persuade the IRA to stop the bombing.

I have now drawn a line under the bombing.

This will be the agenda for the historic talks:

1. Proximity talks to determine the nature of the talks.
2. These will be preceded by elections which will also have to be preceded by talks about the nature of the elections.
3. These will be preceded by a referendum on whether there should be talks before the elections or after.

Wednesday

Today I am at a special conference in a place called the Pacific Rim. I am here to meet the leaders of all the countries called "Tiger Economies" because they are very frightening.

They do not of course frighten me! Oh no. I suggested to Mr Rifkind that I might even bring up the subjects of Human Rights with the Chinese delegate, who is called Mr Fuk Yu Rop. Mr Rifkind said that this was perhaps not such a good idea because it was considered bad manners in the East to mention this sort of issue.

"The thing to do," he said, "is to concentrate on trade links. That will really show them that you mean business."

Thursday

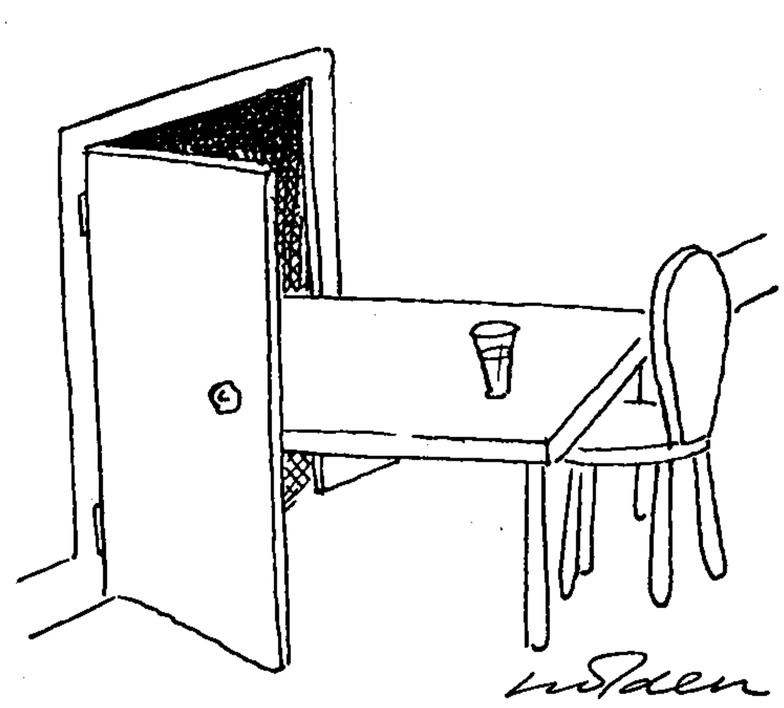
I decided to take Mr Rifkind's advice and had my photo taken shaking hands with the Chinese man. We all wore very nice shirts, incidentally, made from silk and give to us free!

"Very smooth, very cool," I said to the kind organiser who gave me a grey silk one. "Like your Mr Blair!" he replied; obviously missing the point due to his poor command of English.

Friday

Now I am in Hong Kong, staying with my old friend Chris Patten.

Mr Patten explained to me his new idea, which is to allow 2 million



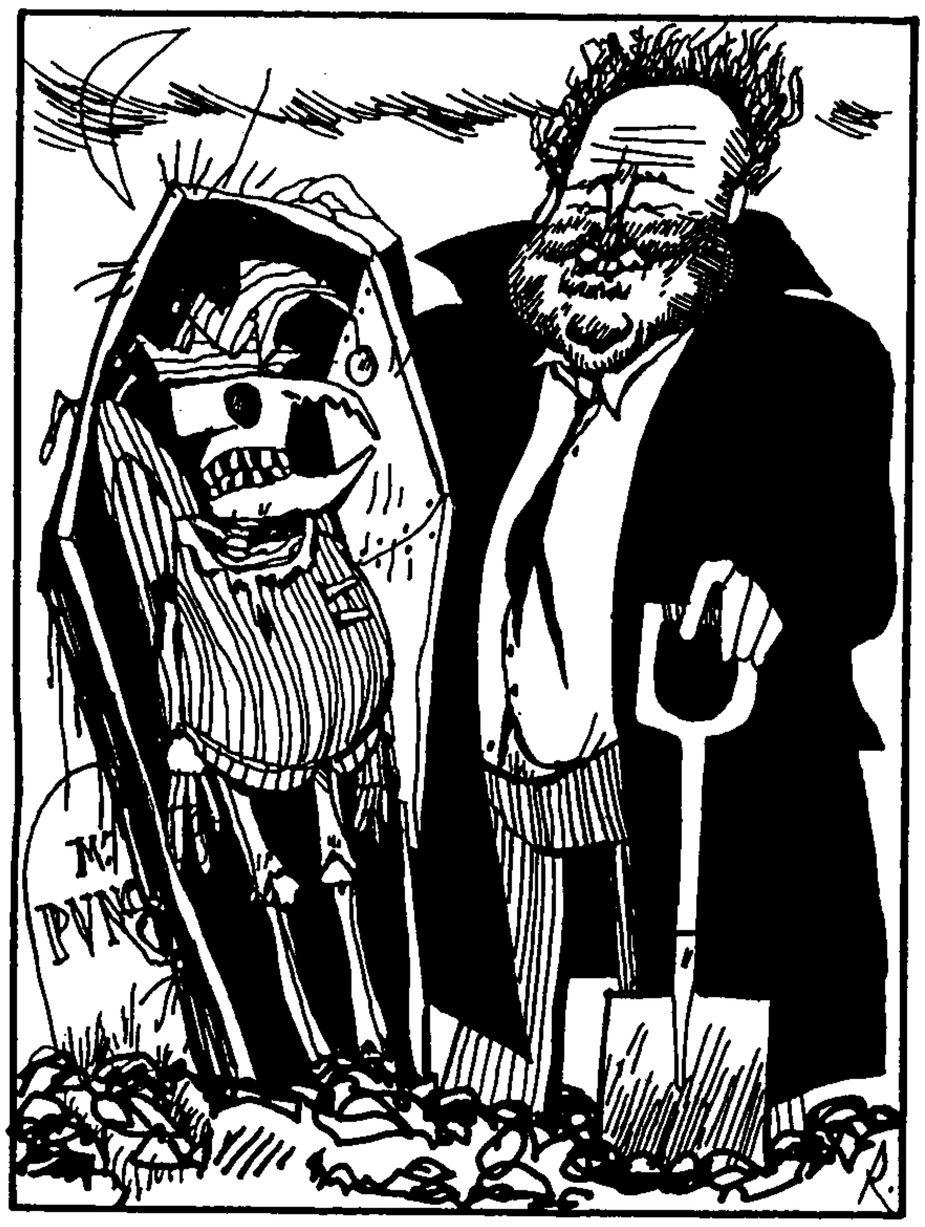
Chinese people to come and have a holiday in Britain, but not to stay because no one in their right mind would want to live here. It all sounded very convincing. "Do you have a work permit?" I asked him jokily. "I have a job lined up already," he replied. "The present occupant will shortly be retiring because he *is* no good and I am going to step into his shoes."

I did not really understand this and am worried that Mr Patten may have been out in the midday sun for too long.

Monday

Today the historic process begins with talks at Stormont. And the good news is that all the parties have agreed to come except Sinn Fein and some of the Unionists. The two sides have at last agreed on something, i.e. they are going to stay away. This is real progress.

Peter McLie



The World's Worst Columnist

(Now Editor of the World's Deadest Magazine)

HAS anyone else noticed how successful Punch magazine has been recently? Whenever I try and buy it, it is not in the shops. And none of my friends have been able to get a copy since 1992. So popular is the humorous magazine that even my dentist cannot procure a single issue for his waiting room. What other magazine can claim such a record? No wonder I have decided to join this amazing success story of the 1990s!

I HAVE had a splendid new idea as to how to fill up my new magazine. Why not have humorous drawings as well as all that old-fashioned writing? Scribbled in ink with maybe a comic caption printed underneath I think they would be a marvellously novel feature.

Perhaps they could depict a lemming on a desert island, or a poor wee man on a psychiatrist's couch saying "Waiter, there is a fly in my soup!"

I even have a name for such a graphic quip. The Trouser Press! (You're Fayed. M.F.)

HAS anyone noticed how unfair it is that the saintly Mohamed al-Fayed has been turned down for a British passport? Why, Mohamed is as English as roast beef, cream teas, London buses, Union Jacks, old copies of *Punch (O.K. You're Hayed again. M.F.)*

RADIO

Pick of the Week

Desert Island Discs with Sue Leggy

Leggy: ... so that was one of Beethoven's records. Now, Gordon Brown, you're 40 and you're not married. A lot of people are going to draw conclusions from that.

Brown: Well, that's fine by me. I'm in public life so they have a right to think whatever they like.

Leggy: Don't try and deny it! You're unmarried, you're middle-aged, I think we've all got a fair picture of what you get up to behind closed doors...

Brown: My next record is one of the Brandenburg...

Leggy: What's the Brandenburg? Is it that pub in Earl's Court where all the leather queens hang out? Yes, we know all about your sort, mate!

Brown: er... er... I've always liked Bach...

Leggy: I would have thought Tchaikovsky was more your scene? He was one of you lot! Or what about Elton John? Isn't he more your cup of tea? Or Freddie Mercury or Judy Garland? The Pet Shop boys? Bronski Beat? Time to come out, Gordi...

Brown: Er... and for my luxury item...

Lawley: Urgh. Don't tell us — this is a family show.

(Fade. Seagulls and silly music)

Those Election Results in Full

Boomerang South (Pop. 2)

Mr J. Swagman (SodoffBetty Republican Labour Party)	0
Sir Humphrey Sheepshagger (Conservative)	2
Mr Abo O'Halloran (Land For Alcohol Party)	0

Conservative Gain

Portíllõ La Bastardõ (Pop. 300,000)

Juan Hellova Cruque (Socialist Embezellista Party)	0
General Torquemado Franco (Muchos Conservatos Party)	300,000

Conservative Gain

(That's enough elections. Ed.)

COMING SOON

NEW CROCK-OPERA

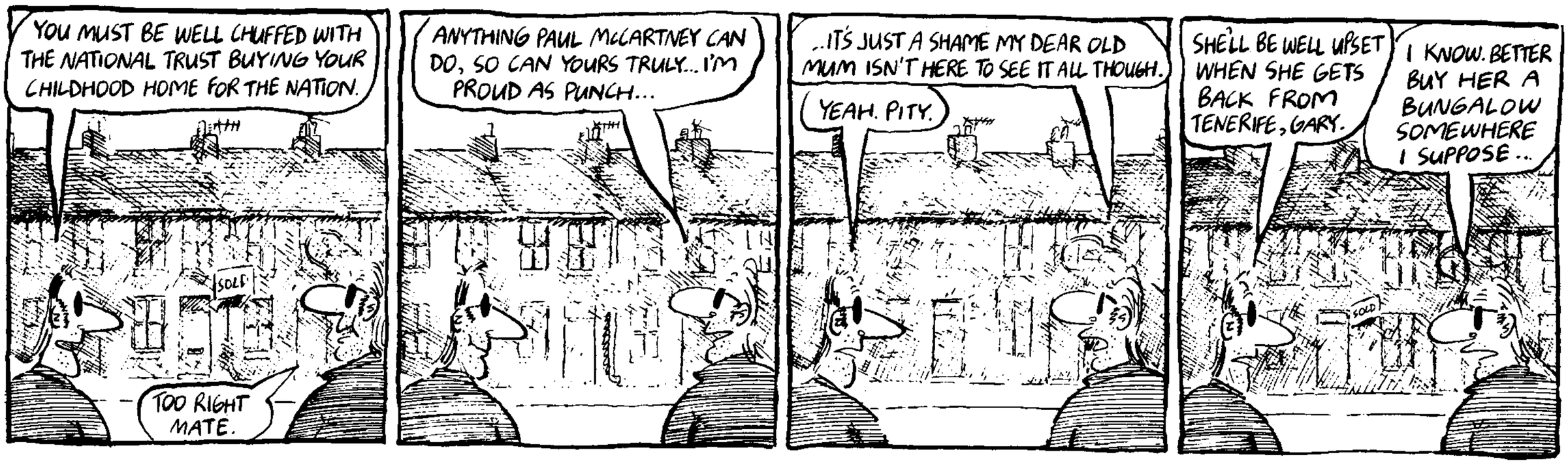
TUMMY

FEED HIM!
SEE HIM!
TOUCH HIM! YOU CAN'T MISS HIM!

WITH THESE CLASSIC HIT SONGS:
"I'M FAT"
"PUFFBALL WIZARD"
"MY TINY PIZZA IS FROZEN" (That's enough songs, Ed.)

Celeb

LIGGER


YOU MUST BE WELL CHUFFED WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST BUYING YOUR CHILDHOOD HOME FOR THE NATION.
SOLD
TOO RIGHT MATE.
ANYTHING PAUL McCARTNEY CAN DO, SO CAN YOURS TRULY... I'M PROUD AS PUNCH...
..IT'S JUST A SHAME MY DEAR OLD MUM ISN'T HERE TO SEE IT ALL THOUGH.
YEAH. PITY.
SHE'LL BE WELL UPSET WHEN SHE GETS BACK FROM TENERIFE, GARY.
I KNOW. BETTER BUY HER A BUNGALOW SOMEWHERE I SUPPOSE..
SOLD

66 CHESTER SQUARE LONDON SWI

Dear Bill,

I must warn you that you will shortly be appearing in a work of fiction entitled "Denis Thatcher, The Missing Link, By His Daughter Carol". As you know, I've always had a soft spot for the girl ever since she pushed Mark off the top board at Broadstairs, and unlike the ghastly S and H she's never really had the hang of reeling in the spondulicks. Even when she got a job on the Telegraph that tall oaf Hastings gave her the bum's rush during a bout of downsizing. As the Canadian hoodlum with the leggy wife who owns the paper put it, "Hastings certainly knows how to drown the kittens." No great consolation for the girl Carol, you may say, who happened to be in the sack when he strode down at midnight to dump it from the Wharfside.

With Carol reduced to working for that shirt-lifter chappie who's on the wireless on Saturday mornings, I searched about a bit and came up with what I thought was a brilliant scheme. Having been dragged along on the Boss's coat-tails to some signing session in Peebles I had found myself in conversation with the fellow from HarperCollins, one Fishwick, who explained that all Carol really needed to do to make her fortune was to sign her name on the dotted, and a team of little monkeys would be set to work at the VDUs to produce a Book of the Month masterpiece the world had been waiting for.

All would have been well, but Carol, who likes the idea of herself as a bit of a journalist, insisted on interfering. The monkeys produced a perfectly good first draft, based on some tapes made late at night at the RAC, in which I reminisced about my wartime years, including the anecdote about Prosser-Cluff burning down the Mess in K.L. to show the natives who was boss, and a few thoughts about Brother Mandela letting the side down. I also dwelt at some length on the years at Burmah, enriching the tale with many amusing stories about Maurice and his gorilla suit.

Friend Fishwick perused all this, and said he liked it very much indeed, in fact he'd never enjoyed a first draft more in his whole experience of publishing. However, he wondered whether it wouldn't benefit from being a touch shorter and having "a bit of spin put on it", whatever that meant. He was afraid hostile pinko critics might run away with the idea that I was a sozzled half-wit of unacceptably right wing views.

This seemed fair enough, and Carol, who had always rather hankered to have a hand in it as she was named as the author, came up with the following wheeze. I don't know whether you've ever seen that show on the TV about the little man with glasses who goes into a telephone box and turns into Superman. Carol's idea was that I was such a man, only the other way round. In truth, a superhuman intellect, master of a hundred boardroom coups, capable of flying through the economic stratosphere and more than a match for Professor Walters and his tartan suitcases. Then, Shazam, I melt into the nearest telephone box and reappear as a shambling wino with a bag of golfclubs, the world no wiser as to my responsibility for shaping world events.

Carol has only quoted you very marginally on how you were convinced for many years by the success of my disguise.

Any chance of your coming to Fishwick's beano for the launch at the East India and Sports? Maurice is being let out with a minder, but unfortunately the major's extra testicle implant requested by the widow F. has gone seriously wrong and he may have to have a leg off.

Meanwhile I'm due to try out the new electric wheelchair at Huntercombe on Saturday – you may remember Maurice wrote off the last one going through the French windows of the clubhouse bar while escaping from his Air Malta Lady – and we could plan a jape or two to alarm the suits from HarperCollins.

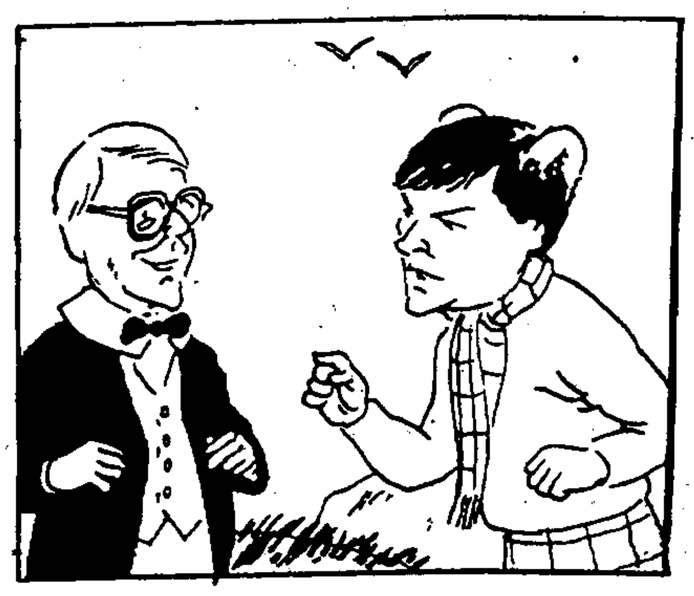
Yours in print for £39.99,

Denis

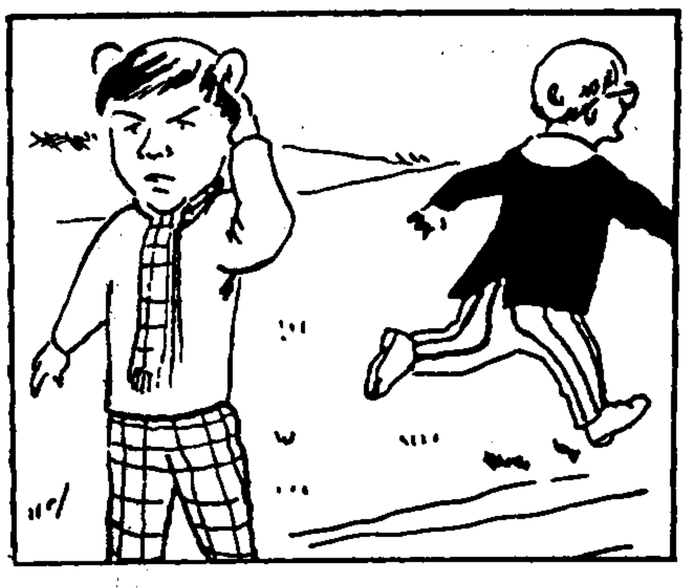
The Adventures of RUPERT The Allason

Pt 94: Rupert Saves The Day!

Wandering through Nutwood on his evening stroll
Rupert spies John stuck in a hole.
"Help me! Help me!" Poor John cried.
"Why should I?" said Rupert. "You've clearly lied."



"Give me a hand and I swear to you
That in future my conduct will be honest and true."
So thanks to Rupert little John was free.
"Now," said Rupert "about that promise you made to me."



"What?" said John, "I made no such pledge,
Your account is misleading I allege."
And so John laughed and ran away
And lived to undermine the basic precepts of Parliamentary democracy another day.

© Nigel West

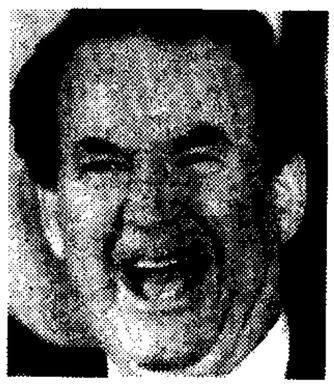
Rupert appears daily in the comic "Hansard!" Don't miss his further adventures!

Your Guide To The Republican Front Runners

An Eye Cut Out 'n' Keep Guide To Those White House Hopefuls

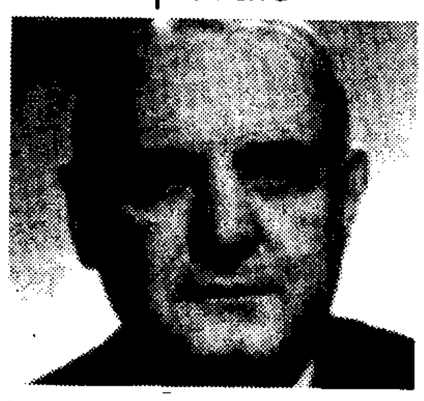
Dull

Loonihan



Buchanan

Forbes



Lamarr

Senator Dull, 89. The only veteran of World War One left alive in America today. A passionate moderate, Dull has been runner-up in no fewer than 13 Presidential run-offs. Despite losing the New Dworkin primary, he made a strong showing in the South Semolina Caucus. Slogan: "Yes, it's Dull!"

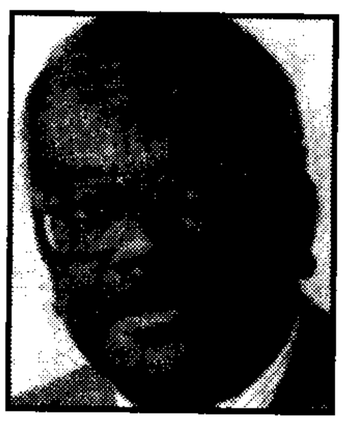
Pat Loonihan, 68. The balding former newspaper columnist and speechwriter to Presidents Washington and Jefferson, O'Loonihan is a passionate believer in "the right to death" for all first-time offenders. Deeply religious, he believes in capital punishment for immigrants and promises to boost jobs by bombing Japan. Slogan: "You don't have to be mad to run for the White House, but I am."

Jack Buchanan, 107. One-time song and dance star, who passionately believes in good manners and dressing for dinner. Slogan: "Goodnight Vienna (city of a thousand melodies)."

Sir Jams Forbes, 62. Fantastically rich multi-media magnate who is prepared to spend 2,000 billion dollars to get into the White House but won't do so. A passionate believer in money. Slogan: "I am very rich."

Governor Hedy Lamarr, 92. Little-known governor of West Lamont. Moderately passionate about being passionately moderate, he amazed pundits by coming a strong sixth in New Dworkin, but may fade when it comes to Hyper Monday. Slogan: "I am going to lose." *(That's enough Presidential hopefuls. Ed.)*

ALISTAIR COOK, 196, writes: I was talking to an old colleague the other day about the momentous events of February 1948, and, for the benefit of my younger listeners, I am not referring to the freak 200-foot snowdrifts which cut off the sleepy little New England township of Garrison Keillor for seven months and resulted in the building of the new Petronella County super-highway to prevent such an unhappy occurrence from ever again befalling the hap-less citizens of "Old Garry" as it was known. No, nor am I referring to the surprise knockout in the 10th round of Smoking Gun Portillo, until that time the longest-reigning undefeated light cruiserweight champion of the world, who as it hap-pened *(drones on in similar vein for several hours).*



By Courtesy of the Daily Telegraph
(edited by Eton's Charles Moore)

Trevor Barbados chooses
A Poem At Ten

The Waste Land

April is the cruellest month. It's official!

Bong!

And lilacs have been bred, successfully, out of dead land.

Bong!

Summer surprised us, say met men, as it came in over the Starnbergersee.

Bong!

T.S. Eliot has that story. (Shot of boring looking man in bank)

And finally, as the poet said,

Under the Bing, Under the Bong, Under the Big Ben Bong.

Trainfloggings 18

A disturbing film about the amoral young (Sir George). A sleazy group of low-lifers led by Sir George try and support their un-pleasant lifestyle by "dealing" in "trains". The gang are constantly "high on shit", and sell off "main-lines" (which they have stolen from the public) at very cheap prices. But George, Major Boy, Fat Clark and friends just don't care. They will do anything for a quick "cash fix" and the "rush" that a "sudden injection of capital" gives them. This is a shocking vision of modern Britain and the seedy spectacle of people addicted to money may offend most viewers. Watch out for the shocking toilet scene where the government goes down the pan.

From the makers of Shallow Waldegrave

ESPADRILLA FA Inquiry Shock

THE SOCCER world gasped last night when Neasden's new multi-figure Colombian signing, Cocoa Espadrilla, was seen live on TV North Circular pulling a gun on Dollis Hill's No 94 shirt.

A slow-motion replay reveals that the former Valpolicella FC striker took a Magnum 45 from inside his shorts, held it to the head of the opposition defender and said: "Go on, punk — make my day."

Goals to Newcastle

Astonishingly, referee Sid Himmler did not see the incident as it happened "off the ball". The linesman, Horace Himmler (Sid's twin brother) *did* put up his flag but put it down again rapidly when a bullet whizzed past his ear.

As a result of the incident, the FA will hold an inquiry, and it is possible that Cocoa could receive a six-month ban — not to mention a 15-year jail sentence.

Head Butty

However Neasdencastle manager Ron Knee, 57, was quick to defend the troubled South American hit-man.

Said Knee: "I bought him on the understanding that he would play tough, competitive football involving a certain amount of armed combat. Prior to his arrival by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man With A Nasty Cold, A Man-Size Box Of Kwik-Save Tissue-Style Wipes And A Bottle Of Extra-Strength Ramsbottom's Expectorant.

at Neasden Bridge I watched a four-hour video of Cocoa in action called 'Espadrilla Killa!' which showed Cocoa working with a variety of different weapons including the Kalashnikov Assault Rifle and the Matrix-Churchill 35mm Toothbrush *(shurely 'cannon'? Ed)*."

Last night Neasden fans (Sid and Doris Bonkers) added their support for the beleaguered footballer.

Said Doris: "Football is a man's game. I come on Saturdays to watch real men shoot each other, not to see a load of little boys in shorts chasing a ball around."

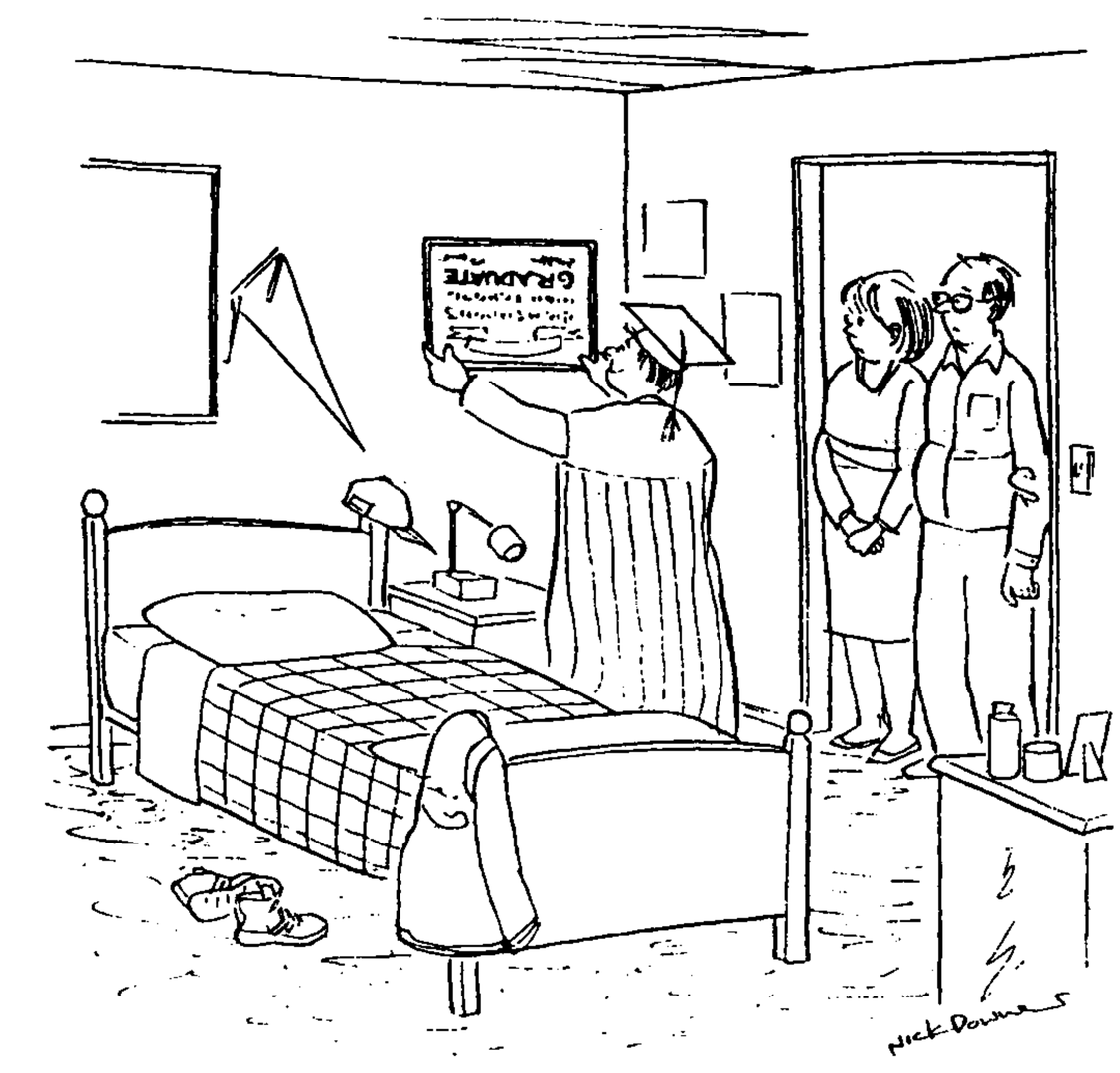
Ron Knee is 58½.

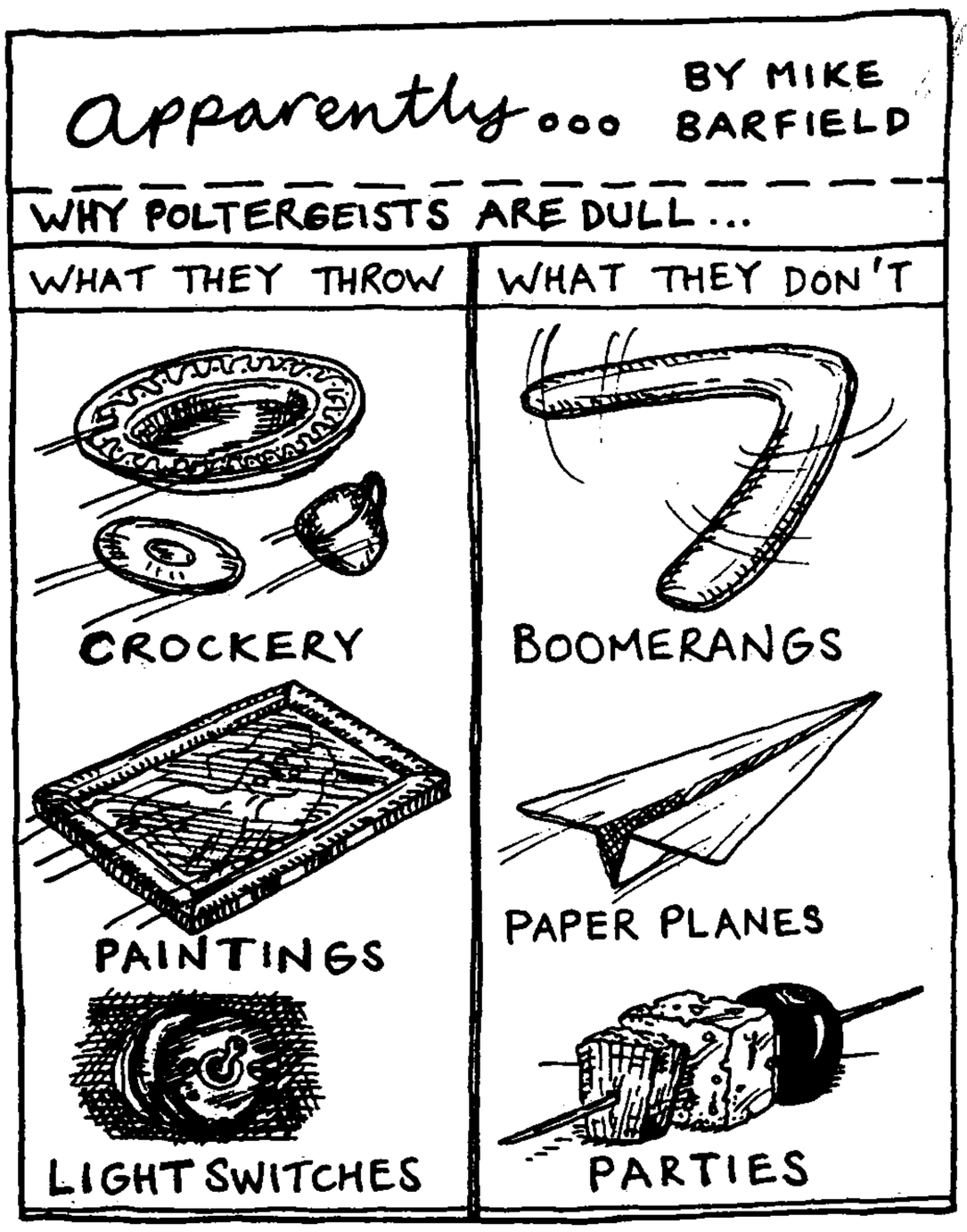
LATE SCORE

The London Clubland Charity Vase (Friendly)

Groucho Pharmaceuticals 7
(Mainliner 1, Sniffer 2, Snow 1, Crack 1, Dope 1, Pevsner [o.g.] 1)

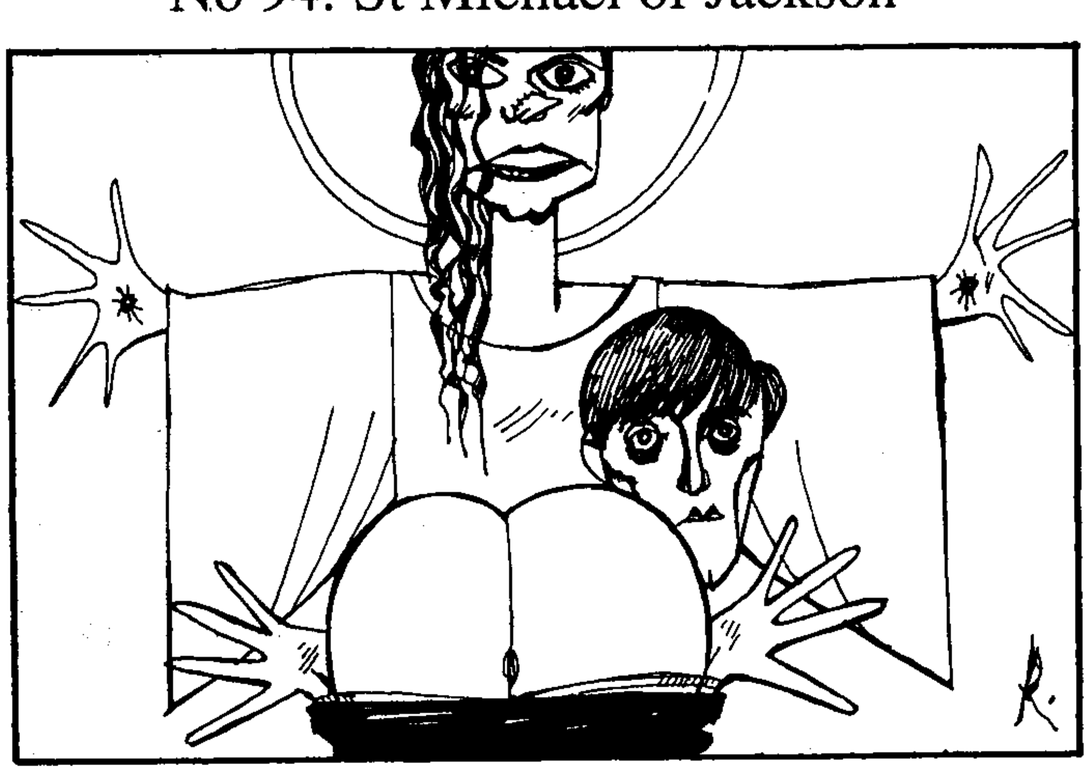
Neasden FC 0





Lives of the Saints

No 94: St Michael of Jackson



THERE once lived in America a poor young black boy, one of many brothers and sisters. So great was his poverty that he was forced to go out and sing and dance to earn a few billion dollars.

The people so liked his singing that he was soon the richest man in the world. Not long afterwards came the first of the many miracles that were to be associated with his name. Overnight his skin became perfectly white, and his nose fell off. And Michael's only desire was to help all the children of the world to be happy. So he invited them all to "sleep over" for a pyjama party, and cruel tongues began to wag. But then came the second miracle when he got off all the charges. Finally, he came to England where he was received by the most famous holy man of that country, St Bob of Geldof. "When Michael sings," said St Bob, "we hear the sound of angels. And when he dances, then surely, this man is the Sony of God." Only one lewd fellow, aptly named Cocker, attempted to disrupt the solemn ritual of St Michael's Assumption Into Heaven by waggling his bottom in a disrespectful fashion. But then came the greatest miracle of all when the millions watching on TV saw nothing at all and it was thought Mr Cocker had never been.

NEXT WEEK: How St Diana of Lahore treated the sick of Jellalabad.

DATE SET FOR ALL-PARTY PEACE TALKS

by Our Royal Staff
Andrew Jelly-Royal Morton

IN A terse communiqué issued today a spokesman for the Di-R-A laid out demands for a full settlement before any peace talks could be held with the British monarchy.

The Princess's demands include:

- **half the kingdom**
- **a cash settlement of £36 billion per annum**
- **the title Her Majesty the Queen of Hearts**
- **the complete withdrawal of Prince Charles from public life**
- **a huge palace millions of miles high, complete with multi-gym, colonic sauna and round-the-clock Will Carling** *(surely psychiatric counselling? Ed.)*

Di-Commissioning

But last night an angry Palace claimed that the Di-R-A's demands were "unrealistic and outrageous".

Said a spokesman, "Given the Di-R-A's recent failure to observe the ceasefire by exploding on Panorama, she has been disqualified from serious negotiations".

There are still, however, a number of possible options to keep the peace process on track. These include:

- **"proximity talks" involving the Prince and Princess of Wales in separate rooms talking through their lawyers**
- **a referendum in which the general public can decide on the future of the monarchy**

But a Buckingham Palace spokesman, speaking from the Sri Chazneesh Temple of Hindu Studies, Neasden, said "it really is appalling. I am not going to be forced to the negotiating table by this one-woman gang of psychopaths".

Divorce talks will begin on May 24th.

Di's Title — You Decide

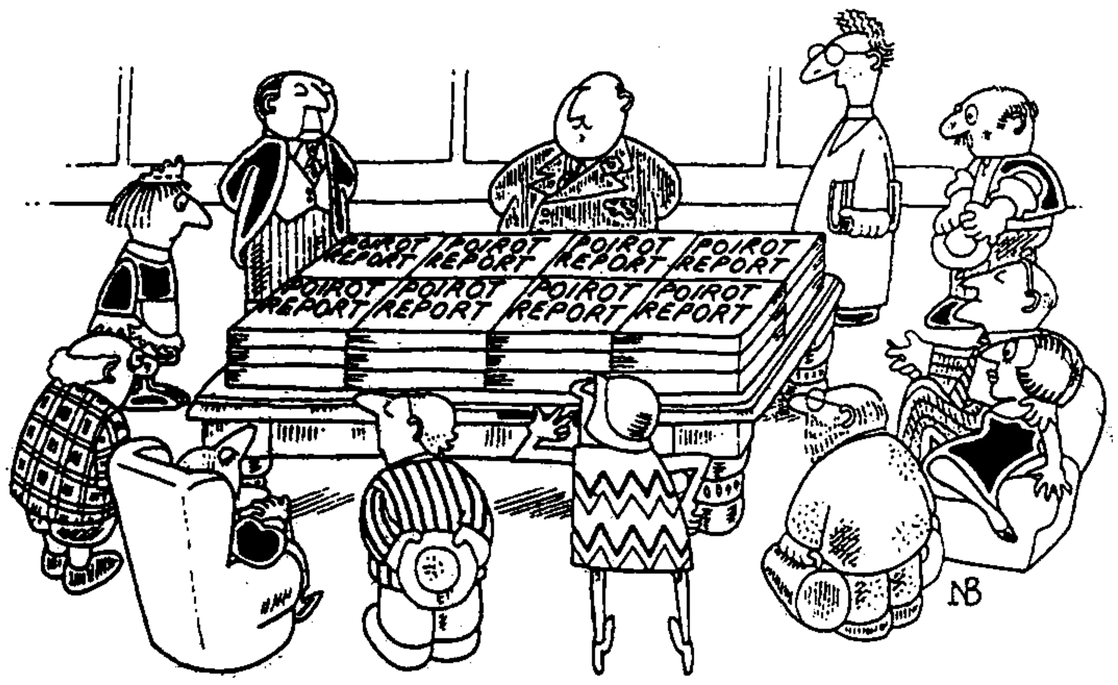
EYE phonelines are now open for you to decide how Princess Di should be addressed after the divorce:

- **Her Royal Holiness the Princess of Hearts**
- **Mother Diana of Kensington**
- **Her Majesty the Queen of Diamonds, Rubies, Sapphires and any other jewels she can lay her hands on**
- **the Maharani of Imran**
- **the Lady Bulimia**
- **Princess Squidgy of Cellnet**
- **the Hon. Mrs Harbour-Club**
- **Mariella Frostrup**

Ring Kensington Palace now on 0860-426444 *(Peak Rate 84p a second, cheap rate 83p a second).* All proceeds go to the Save The Di Fund.

That Royal Divorce
What They Will Keep In The Big Split

His Lawyers	Her Lawyers
Money	Cash
Cash	Cheques
Cheques	Money
Lolly	Lolly
Access to more money	Custody of the loot
Visiting rights to the bank to count all the notes	Consultation over the handling of the money
The right to take the money on frequent skiing holidays	The title "Account Holder" to go with all the dosh



"I suppose you're wondering why I asked you all to gather in the library"

All Souls Entrance Examination

Philosophy And Moral Science

Read the following fragment of a Platonic dialogue.

Scotrates: Let us imagine a man who fails to tell the truth in the agora. Can such behaviour ever be excused?

Waldegravides: O Scotrates, surely the question we should address is whether such a man as you describe is misleading his friends deliberately, or if he is unaware that he is so doing?

Scotrates: Oh come, Waldegravides, this is mere sophistry. You will be telling me next that it is possible for a man to lie in good faith.

Waldegravides: Why, so it is. I have this friend who finds himself in just such a position.

Scotrates: Then surely such a man must lack intelligence. For no wise student of philosophy, such as you, Waldegravides, could imagine that one can intend to deceive one's fellows and yet remain an honourable man. For surely to lie is itself dishonourable?

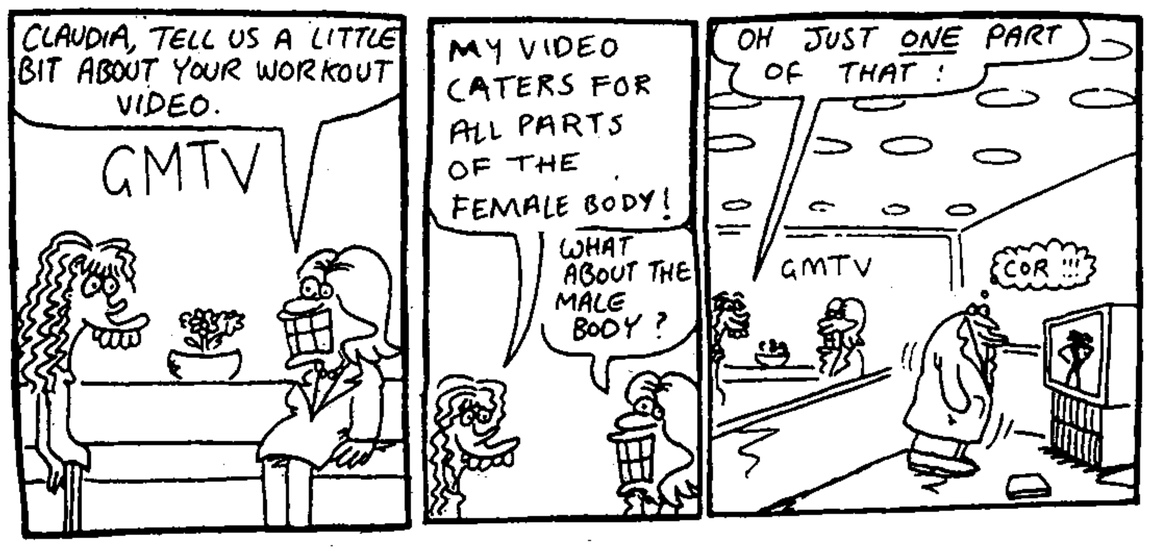
Waldegravides: But I, I mean my friend, am very clever indeed. And I am also a member of the government.

Scotrates *(mounting bicycle)*: Well, in that case I fully accept that your dishonourable act was entirely honourable, and that your duplicity was in no sense duplicitous.

Translate the above into English.

TIME ALLOWED: As long as you like if you are a member of the Government. Others may have 3 minutes.

SUPERMODELS KERBER


CLAUDIA, TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR WORKOUT VIDEO.
GMTV
MY VIDEO CATERS FOR ALL PARTS OF THE FEMALE BODY!
WHAT ABOUT THE MALE BODY?
OH JUST ONE PART OF THAT!
GMTV
COR!!!

DIARY

Thursday 6 April: Jemima arrives on set, very energised. She has a bit of an itch on her left shoulder for a few seconds, but simply refuses to make a song and dance about it, just carrying on as if nothing had happened. How I admire her. She's the bravest of the brave, that girl.

Friday 7 April: Hotel quite nice. Make note to put this observation as "local colour" in my Diary.

Saturday 8 April: Tenser than fuck. Fucker than tense. Done in and utterly frazzled. It's as hard as buggery willing oneself into the language and thought of Austen's England. First day nerves, I suppose. Ha. If only I were more like my wretched "luvvie" image. But I'm too fucking down-to-earth, that's the pissing-off thing. That's the trouble with being an actor: you're like a soldier in the trenches on the Western Front, alone but for a single red rose, utterly naked as the rain pisses down, and the enemy brush their hair and put on their make-up, all ready for another day of heavy fucking shelling.

Sunday 9 April: Robert (Hardy) tells us he's just found the most marvellous little old lady in the street, utterly entrancing and delightful. "A little bit of olde England that shalt always been mine owneth, methinks" he says. Robert's speech has the natural nuance and fluidity of the 19th century. Send note to production manager: would it be poss. to locate little old lady and wrap her up for Robert as end-of-shoot leaving pressie? Says he'll see what he can do.

Monday 10 April: Director Ang takes us through our meditation and exercises. We sit on cushions and breathe deeply, imagining ourselves to be fallen leaves, slowly disintegrating into the deep brown rich English ground beneath us. Sadly, Fred, the assistant studio manager is not informed of this, arriving with a broom and attempting to sweep us up. Eating a pear, I think to myself that on occasion, humans can be prone to muddle. I fancy Jane might have rather approved of this observation.

Thursday 13 April: Wake up in middle of night. Bit weepy. Try to picture myself as Bosnian refugee, starving from lack of food. Imagine the hunger. Tearful. Suddenly feel peckish, wolf down a Mars Bar. Feel dreadfully guilty — much guiltier than John Major and his philistine cohorts have ever managed to feel!

EMMA THOMPSON'S
Sense and Sensibility
DIARY

Friday 14 April: Spot on chin. Fuckity fuck. Hate Mars Bars to buggery. Stressed. Bit weepy. Light anti-stress candle in bathroom. Have a pee. Misfire and put out candle. Fuck. Sob.

Monday 24 April: Long psychological investigations of characters over dinner. Alan says Elinor is basically a control freak, pass carrots please. I say she's the kind of woman who's always looking for a centre of gravity and could probably do with a bloody good shag, have you finished with the sprouts down that end when you're quite ready. Ang nods. I think he is surprised by the depth of thought English actors put into it all, and how we wrestle so deeply with our characters. Delving into his own character, Robert Hardy says Sir John Middleton is every bit the old-fashioned English country gent with the slightly theatrical delivery, but with a shorter wig than usual, which he appreciates, as it avoids what Jane would no doubt have called the itchy-ear syndrome.

Wednesday 26 April: A thrilling English morn 'midst the ravishing English countryside. In break from shoot, I take a stroll. Sunken roads are beautiful to behold and Devon lambs remarkably handsome. On Dartmoor, I meet a small boy.

Me: Hello.

Boy: H'llo.

Me: This is a thrilling English morn 'midst the ravishing English countryside.

Boy: Come again?

Me: I said, this is a thrilling English morn 'midst the ravishing English countryside.

Boy: Tch. Huh. Ugh. Yuk.

Me: Country people with their earthy monosyllables and fruitful apostrophes are so much more *real* than the media crowd. How I yearn for such a sense of instinctive reality in my giddy, hectic life!

Boy: Go feck yer'sel'.

Pure Jane! I laugh my most natural laugh. Ah, England!

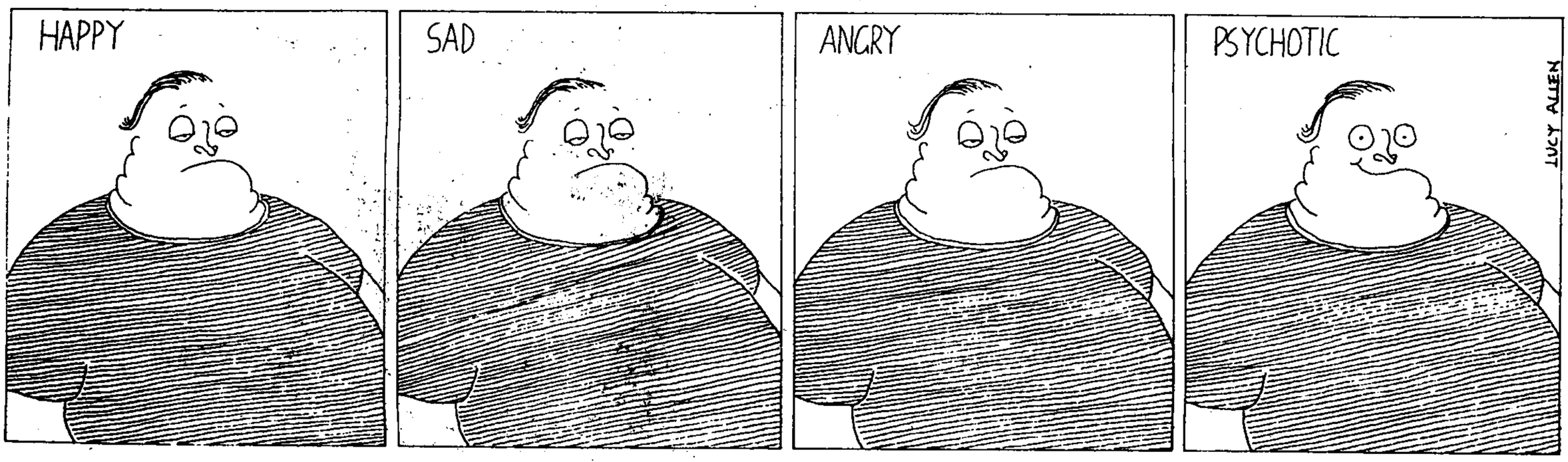
Friday 5 May: Hugh Grant all over newspapers for having it off with an LA prostitute. Feel dreadfully sorry for Hugh, getting all this rotten publicity. How I loathe the Murdoch papers. How can they publish this ghastly stuff, when it's none of their business? Let's hope it all dies down and is forgotten over the next few months. Remind myself to put Hugh/prostitute incident in my diary of the film shoot in time for publication mid-Feb.

Monday 7 May: New hotel quite nice. Jot it down.

Thursday 11 May: On lavvy with bowel probs. Start to hate myself. Omigod. Grow a little weepy. Thank fuck I have a fully developed sense of humour. Thank you, Monty Python, Jane Austen and a hundred other influences. At least I have learned to laugh at myself. But now is neither the time nor the place for jokes — I just don't see what's so funny, that's all — so I decide not to. Why the fuck should I? Eh? Instead, I light a joss stick, massage my pressure points and look caringly into the mirror. Spot back on chin.

Tuesday 16 May: I have just ovulated, so I draw the company together. "I've just ovulated" I announce, with unnerving honesty. I sense they love me for it, so inevitably I grow a bit sobby, "So let's be very, very quiet for three minutes" I continue, "and **think** our way into being an egg". Alan Rickman goes on for longer than anyone else, at least six minutes. In my opinion, he gives a marvellously **hard-boiled** performance, bless him.

A BRIEF LOOK AT... THE EMOTIONAL ENGLISHMAN



Literary Review

I'm Mandy. Fly me...

The Blair Revolution: Can New Labour Deliver?
Peter Mandelson
and Roger Liddle
(Faber, £7.99)

THE rise of "new" Labour has been achieved without the party being committed to any hard policies whatsoever. There is no manifesto, and it remains vital that there should not be one, for as long as possible. Only when definite policies have been announced will there be something to disagree with. So there was a deal of excitement about this book before it appeared.

The organ-grinder speaks! Here, surely, would be the truth about "new" Labour at last. It seemed hardly possible to write a book without giving away at least a few pointers, inadvertently if nothing else.

But once the book had been read, all the pre-publication interest vanished. The *Guardian* did serialise it on the cheap but the day after the extracts finished, the paper had the book prominently trashed by Roy Hattersley as "banal, pretentious and risibly inadequate".

For what Mandelson and his dorky co-author have managed here is a masterpiece of vapouring. They have contrived to fill 260 pages by simply saying over and over again that under "new" Labour, everything should be marvellous. They never say why. It's about as much use as a gigantic astrology column.

On every subject the authors just say things have got to be better. The EU? "There has to be more rigour, more continuity and greater preparation in the Council's decision-making." Oh, fine, that's sorted. Local government? "Local democracy needs to work better as well." Ripping. Government itself? "Greater openness in government should help raise the quality of public and political debate." Course it should!

And what about society as a whole? "Notions of partnership and community should influence all aspects of our lives," they tell us. They probably should, shouldn't they? But how do you make it happen? On this sticky topic our authors wisely stay schtum, preferring to offer such philosophically profound generalisations as that "times change, and we must learn from experience and live in the world as it now is".

Conscious, perhaps, that some of their nostrums sound a bit feeble, they repeatedly assert that actually they are "tough" and "robust". Thus they talk happily of the "tough and active concept of community".

Conscious, perhaps, that these "concepts" are actually meaningless, they repeatedly insist that they do "mean" something. Thus: "Community is a robust and powerful idea, and it is at the heart of the stakeholder economy New Labour wishes to create. It means teamwork... It means mutuality... It means justice..." Does it so?

Trying to drag the reader through these mists and fogs, the authors have resorted to the embarrassing expedient of creating fictional characters (Ben, Laura, Eileen, Peter, Tracy) to try to create human interest. In an insultingly stupid last chapter, they fantasise about how lovely things will be for them all when Toni's in power: " 'Morning, mum,' smiles Peter as he arrives to take Eileen out for her operation. 'It'll soon be done, and then you'll be out and about again.' Thank God Labour got in and saved the NHS, Eileen thinks."

The chapter imagining the moment of Blair's arrival in Number 10 is an even more excruciating little wet dream, however. "By convention he will be greeted by all the No 10 staff, who will line up and clap him through the entrance hall of his new home-cum-office." Cum's the word.

Books & Bookmen

■ **IF there is one ex-publisher whose name brings other publishers out in spots it's Dame Carmen Callil. Imagine their rage and frustration when they learnt the virago herself is to chair the Booker panel.**

Having taken Booker's shilling, Callil is in diplomatic mood. "What sets Booker apart from other literary prizes," she pronounces, "is that it does so much for writers..." Eh? Why does she feel that other, more intelligently run prizes don't do much for writers? The real beneficiaries of the Booker are the *publishers*. Carmen goes on: "The panel of judges is always an excellent one and every book is read by every judge." Remarkable. Quite remarkable.

Last year the judges had to read 141 novels but were only able to summon enthusiasm for five. None was by Martin Amis. Shock, horror: something had to be done. Almighty Goff has decreed that publishers may henceforth submit only two titles per imprint (previously it was three), and that the shortlist *must* comprise six books. In addition, no self-published or privished (*sic*) novel may even be submitted, which is a belated snub to the 1995 panel of judges who chose Jill Paton Walsh's *The Knowledge of Angels*, a book which had failed to find a British publisher.

Publishers, in response, mutter fatuously about a boycott of the Booker, which would probably lead to a shortlist of novels published by Peter Owen and Marion Boyars. The whingeing is led by Cape's "Gentleman" Dan Franklin, who feels it's not cricket that great imprints such as Crap actually have to decide for themselves which of their novels are better than others. As if they could, or would dare be seen to offend authors and agents. In addition to which it's all terribly unfair to poor Salman, who still hasn't won twice, and all the other previous winners.

Early to predict but this year's winner, which may or may not prove the last, is likely to be Graham Swift's *Last Orders* with Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* as runner-up.

□ EDDIE "McBastard" Bell, boss of HarperCollins, is nearing the end of his ninth life now that his friend and protector, George "Even Bigger Bastard" Craig, has been axed from HarperCollins in the US. Rupert Murdoch has finally noticed that the company is not doing very well. It surely cannot be long before Anthea Disney, the new president and chief executive officer, asks some awkward questions about why so few of McBastard's huge advances have earned out. The latest in the series continues with Eddie's love affair of all things Thatcher. Carol Thatcher's biography of her lovable father Denis has been bought by HarperCollins and the Iron Lady's daughter has been paid a reported £250,000 advance for her lucid prose. Surely this can't be true?

'Bookworm'

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *Too Damn Famous*, by Joan Collins.

THE HYPE: Another sizzling tale of showbiz stars and sex, sex, sex, published by Orion in 1995 before the actress's infamous court victory over Random House — who suggested her writing wasn't up to scratch.

THE PRICE: Originally £15.99, last seen at Fair Deal books of Windsor at an unglamorous £3.99 — or three for £10.

O·B·N

"He sings with the voice of angels and when he moves his feet you can see God dance..."

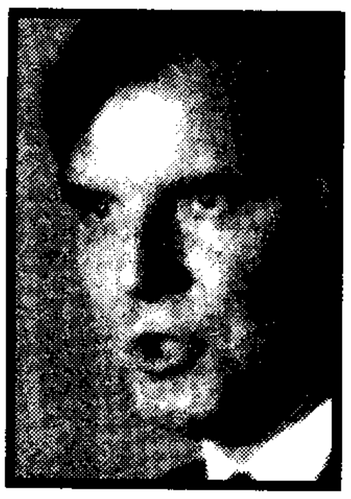
BOB GELDOF (on Michael Jackson) Brit Awards speech

Submitted by Jonathan Justice

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
YAH, WE'RE DOING THE NICK LEESON BOOK...
LITTLE BROWN
£450,000 ADVANCE
...YOU KNOW, THE BLOKE WHO WASTED SO MUCH OF THE FIRM'S MONEY THEY WENT BUST AND EVERYONE LOST THEIR....
.... JOBS..... ER.... OH. I'LL CALL YOU BACK
LITTLE BROWN
PENNY DROPS

A LETTER FROM JONATHAN AITKEN'S LAWYER *with footnotes*



26th February 1996

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of Jonathan Aitken MP, who is the subject of an article in the current issue of Private Eye headed "Another little lie from Jonathan Aitken MP." The article states that Mr Aitken lied when he said "Until I arrived on the board of BMARC, I had not been involved in the arms business".

That statement was in fact the truth. The letter, dated March 1985, which, according to your article, proves Mr Aitken to be a liar, was not written to Mr James as chairman of BMARC, which was an arms company manufacturing guns and ammunition **[1]**. In 1985, Mr Gerald James had nothing to do with BMARC which did not become part of the Astra group until 1988. **[2]** This letter was written in March 1985 to Gerald James as chairman of Astra Pyrotechnics Ltd a company in Mr Aitken's constituency, which at that time made fireworks and military pyrotechnics such as smoke grenades, flares, blank ammunition and other harmless objects used for military training. **[3]** By no stretch of the imagination could these products be described as "arms". **[4]** Furthermore it is difficult to see how Mr Aitken could realistically even be said to have been involved in the military pyrotechnics business. Mr Aitken's letter was a response to a request from the chairman of a company in his constituency for help in getting orders for pyrotechnics from Saudi Arabia where, as was generally known, Mr Aitken had useful contacts. **[5]** In his letter of March 8 1985 (a copy of which I enclose lest you should think there is any nystery about the matter) Mr Aitken made it clear that he had no commercial interest in the matter and that once he had made the introductions he wished to bow out of the picture because, as he said: "I am anxious not to mix up my parliamentary and business roles with a company operating in my constituency". **[6]** It follows from the above that Mr Aitken has been seriously libelled. **[7]** Unless I hear from you within the next seven days that you are prepared to publish a full apology in terms to be approved by Mr Aitken and to pay his legal costs, he will issue a writ. **[8]**

Yours faithfully,

Richard C.M. Sykes, Solicitor, 45 Great Peter Street, London SW1.

& THE TRUSTY SHIELD OF BRITISH FAIR PLAY

[1] True, and there was nothing in he Eye article to suggest otherwise.

[2] True, and there was nothing in the Eye article to suggest otherwise.

[3] To this list of "harmless objects" Mr Gerald James, then chairman of Astra Pyrotechnics, adds the following: "Astra in 1985 was manufacturing stun grenades (anti-terrorist), practice bombs for use by RAF and US Air Force and Navy, plastic bullets or baton rounds for riot control, fuses for explosives and ammunition, pig-stick cartridges for bomb disposal work, and were filling charge bags with propellant for 155mm artillery shells". **[4]** Mr James disagrees. He writes to the Eye: "Some military pyrotechnics could be classified as arms... even a signal cartridge is fired from a pistol. I would certainly not call them harmless. I don't think Mr Sykes would, if he had a plastic bullet or baton round fired at him or bounced off the road (the proper technique) in the region of his testicles".

[5] Mr James writes: "When I became chairman of Astra in 1981, the strategy was to turn the company into a multi-million pound arms and munitions company competing world-wide. Jonathan, I believe, must have been aware of all this as we met him in mid-1981 and subsequently explained our philosophy in detail. This we did regularly. Jonathan was, as far as I am aware, fully involved in the arms business long before BMARC days. That is why we were so keen to talk to him. He was after all involved closely involved with Wafic Said and the Saudis and had helped Vosper Thorneycroft through Sheik Athel to win an order for frigates under the Al Yamamah deal. This had been before he joined BMARC."

[6] Mr Aitken's letter, so generously enclosed by Mr Sykes, reveals: "I am deputy chairman of Security Centres Holdings PLC which now has a growing business in the field of international defence, military and security training. Our director who heads up this side of the operation is Alastair Morrison DSO (and ex-SAS hero)... Alastair is in the process of selling all sorts of training programmes for special forces for various Middle East armies." This "side of the operation" was a company with the non-military name of Defence Systems International, chaired by the non-military Major General Viscount Monckton of Brenchley MC.

PS. Curiously, there is no reference to Security Centres Holdings in any of Jonathan Aitken's entries in the MPs Register of Interests in any of the years (June 1982-October 1985) he was the company's deputy chairman, even though another Tory MP who preceded him on the board, Sir Hugh Fraser, did declare his interest. Aitken simply declared his chairmanship of his bank Aitken Hume and "subsidiary and associate companies". Aitken Hume and its associates held 7.9 per cent of the share capital of Security Centres Holdings.

PPS. The day after his lawyer's letter to the Eye, Mr Aitken apologised to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards for not properly registering a £10,000 directorship with Astra defence systems Ltd.

[7] Mr James writes: "It does appear to me that Mr Sykes is barking up the wrong tree... As regards the Private Eye article of 23rd February 1996, I do not believe it is inaccurate in any particular."

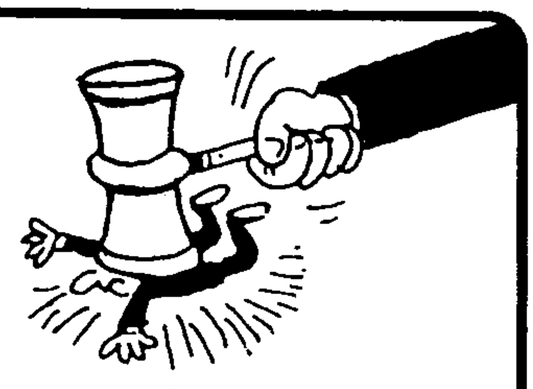
[8] Feel free, Ed.

THE THINGS THEY WRITE

"The truth is easier to see if you forget everything you have learnt at school about Whigs and Tories and Jacobites and look at how governments actually work: how those who know the inner workings, and are committed above all to the process of government itself, not to the triumph of faction, go on from reign to reign because they *are* the State."

-- *William Waldegrave, reviewing* The Memoirs and Speeches of James, the Second Earl Waldegrave, 1742-1763. Sunday Telegraph, *14 August 1988 (a few months before he changed the guidelines).*

Beak of the Week



Peter Morris JP, chairman of the bench, Newtown, Powys

Parental responsibility was the issue at Newtown magistrates court on February 8th, when Mrs Rosette McDonald, who is seriously ill with a weak heart, was held responsible for not paying £550 in fines run up by her 17-year-old son. Mr Morris and his colleagues sent her to prison for seven days. She was arrested on February 21st and bundled off to Risley. There, once more, outraged prison officers sent her to a lawyer, who threatened to take the case to the High Court. At once the magistrates conceded, and the clerk signed a consent order agreeing that Mrs McDonald had been unlawfully imprisoned. After a quick application to the High Court, she was released.

Rotten to the Corby

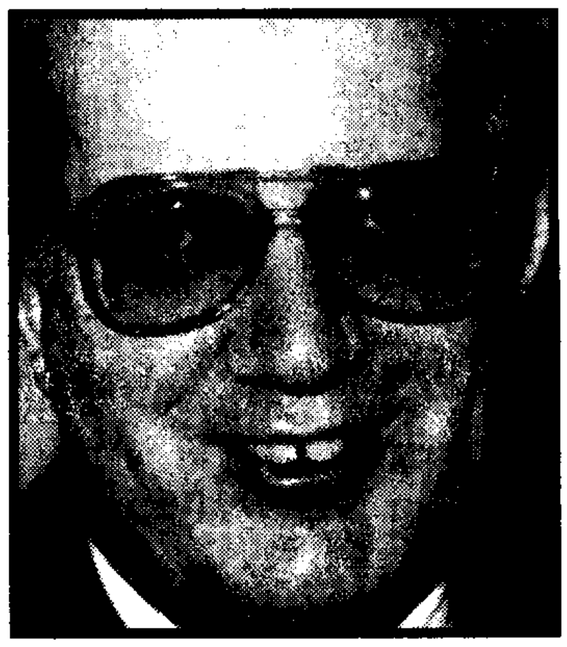
SIXTEEN months after the *Eye* published the story in two successive issues, raised it with the Nolan Commission and tried to interest other MPs in it, some interest is at last being shown in the curious relationship between the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies and Mr William Powell, the Tory MP for Corby.

In 1994 the *Eye* published two stories about payments amounting to many thousands of pounds made to Mr Powell by the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies and its generous director, Omar Al Hassan. Powell and Hassan refused to answer the *Eye*'s questions about the payments, which were not declared in the register of MPs' interests until this year.

Recent interest has been spiced with the rumour that Dr Al Hassan may now be working for the Iraqi government — a rumour he strongly denies. In a typically feeble display, the *Sunday Times* Insight team on 25 February blazoned across two pages the headline TORY LINKS TO '$10M IRAQI SLUSH FUND'. The story refers to "a Tory MP" and "an Arab lobbyist" without naming either. Close connections between Hassan's GCSS and the Iraqi government seem unlikely. GCSS has been funded mainly from Kuwait and Bahrein, both of whose regimes would be outraged by any link with Iraq. More interesting is the fact that in 1983 Dr Al Hassan was sacked as London secretary of the Arab League for systematic "misappropriation of funds and forgery".

The sacking followed a visit to London by an auditor for the Arab League, who found 20 bogus payments, some of them substantial, from League funds backed by forged invoices.

For instance, in 1980 £3,000 was shelled out for stationery to two companies who never received the money. It was "disposed of" by the director, Hassan. Down the same drain went, in 1981, £2,154 for, among other things, a printing machine which never materialised; in 1982, £3,000 was ostensibly paid by cheque to Doris Foxton, wife of the Labour peer Lord Molloy. She never got the cheque and never endorsed it. There were also endless examples of inappropriate "invitations and gifts" and what the auditor called "haphazard expenditure and wastage of League funds".



DECLARED AT LAST: William Powell MP

Hassan was duly sacked. In October 1983 he appealed to the administrative court of the Arab League demanding reinstatement and compensation of a million dollars for loss of office. He complained that his reputation had been ruined and that the auditor's investigatory methods "passed all bounds". Payments to MPs, journalists and university teachers, he explained, were "for the benefit of Arab causes". These submissions were dismissed and the sacking reaffirmed. A few years later, Hassan got his current job as director of the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, which has continued to make payments to important people "for the benefit of Arab causes".

Mr Powell continues to help wherever he can. Last month he and Hassan hosted a meeting in the House of Commons for Mr Abdul Bishara, secretary of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Lord Avebury, of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, who was invited, was 10 minutes late. Powell wrote the peer a stinging rebuke: "You may be sure that Mr Bishara found your behaviour at best eccentric, certainly arrogant, and at worst deliberately offensive." Avebury replied on 28 February: "Thank you for your insufferably pompous letter... I don't know why you have to act as messenger boy for Mr Bishara."

Prints Charlie

■ THE first minister after Scott to stick firmly by the old traditions of the Waldegrave School for Misleading Parliament is Timothy Kirkhope (*Who he? Ed*)

Kirkhope is a dull Newcastle solicitor and the junior home office minister who responds for the government on the case of the 1978 murder of the newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater.

Kirkhope was asked by Labour MP Chris Mullin on 15 February: "How come 16 years elapsed before it was disclosed that two unidentified fingerprints were found on the bicycle belonging to Carl Bridgewater?"

Kirkhope replied: "The defendant's solicitors knew of unidentified fingerprints three weeks before the referred case in 1989."

Most people would assume this answer meant that the fingerprints on the bicycle were known about in 1989. But no. Everyone has known since the murder that there were unidentified prints somewhere at the farm. But the fact that there were unidentified fingerprints on the murdered boy's bicycle — highly significant since the murderer or an accomplice flung the bike over a wall into a pigsty — was not disclosed until 1994.

Not content with one blatant deception of Parliament, Kirkhope promptly proceeded to another. In the Commons debate on the Bridgewater case on February 28, Kirkhope blandly asserted, in answer to Bruce Grocott, that the renunciation of the verdict by the foreman of the jury at the original trial was considered by the Court of Appeal in the 1988-89 hearing. This was rubbish. The foreman's amazing statement was first disclosed in June 1993 (see Eye 821).

Scott. Will they resign? (Contd.)

■ STEPHEN WALL, former private secretary to prime minister Major, managed to get his boss off the Scott hook by the subtle device of deleting some rather crucial words in a letter.

In January 1992 former Labour foreign affairs spokesman Gerald Kaufman wrote to Major to ask about allegations about British arms for Iraq. The original reply drafted in 10 Downing Street said the 1985 government guidelines for defence sales to Iraq remained in force until the invasion of Kuwait "with only minor modifications". By the time the letter, duly signed by the prime minister, got to Kaufman — hey presto! – the words "with only minor modifications" had been deleted.

What had happened? Had the prime minister himself deleted the key words? Not at all. In written evidence to the inquiry in February 1994, Mr Wall bravely owned up that the deletion was all his fault. "I did not tell the prime minister that the deletion had been made," he confessed (D4.50). Scott notes (D4.44) that shortly before the letter went out with the crucial deletion, the cabinet office had approved a briefing for a Commons select committee which admitted that the guidelines had been "amended". Scott concludes (D4.49): "The failure to consult [with the Cabinet Office] was a regrettable omission on Mr Wall's part."

In 1993, before he covered up for Major to Scott, Mr Wall had been promoted — to be British ambassador in Portugal. In the summer of 1995 he was promoted again — spectacularly — to one of the top three plum jobs for diplomats: ambassador and UK permanent representative to the European Union. Will he resign?

WIND IN THE WILLIS

■ EXECUTIVES at Willis Corroon, the City institution which persuaded thousands of unsuspecting people to opt out of their workplace pension schemes, is being investigated by the regulator, Imro.

Executives are reported to be "distressed" at the tough line being taken by Imro, and contrast it with what the *Independent* (22 Feb) calls the "softer line" taken by the other regulator, the Personal Investment Authority (PIA).

All this is intensely embarrassing for a prominent member of the PIA board, Mr Allan Daffern, who is chief executive of... Wills Corroon Financial Planning.

Smug plug

■ W.H. SMITH issued a proud press release about the new greetings stamps released by the post office on 26 February.

The stamps display famous cartoons, including one of Charley Barsotti's cartoon dog. The Smith press release reminds readers that the dog is "well known in the UK as the trade mark of the W.H. Smith Business Supplies Niceday brand of office products".

While celebrating the wonderful windfall in free advertising, the press release forgets to point out that W.H. Smith's new chief executive, "Wild" Bill Cockburn, was until recently chief executive of the post office.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

EASTERN Europe in general and the former Soviet Union in particular have turned into graveyards for most western investors tempted by the Wild East.

Apart from those early entrepreneurs who made the first deals and the locals with whom they cut them, the tale is usually a by now familiarly sorry one of promises, not profits. Hardly surprising in a region where the gangsters *are* the government.

One of the most successful undertakers for the gullible seeking Soviet gold has been the splendidly inappropriately named Old Etonian Rupert Galliers-Pratt, whose track record both here and in the former Soviet Union is anything but inspiring. So too has been his choice of business associates, who include such spectacular bankrupts as Lord Beaverbrook and Paul "Boom Boom" Bloomfield.

Yet last month saw brokers Gerrard Vivian Gray sponsor the flotation on the speculative Alternative Investment Market of Rupert Galliers-Pratt's latest rocket propelled grenade aimed at investors' wallets, Optical Care, which proposes to sell spectacles to the huddled masses of Poland and the Czech Republic. The people who really need glasses are those who invest.

Consider the RPG record. His greatest City claim to fame was as chairman of pawnbrokers Harvey & Thompson — which collapsed into receivership after being renamed Lightship! By the time dealings in the shares were suspended in 1993, the price had all but disappeared from 500p to 7p.

But not before some unusual inter-company dealings (an RPG speciality) had been disclosed between Lightship and another collapsible company, Discos, where RPG had an indirect interest. Discos, which went into receivership, introduced retail customers to a finance company from which Lightship's subsidiary H&T Finance bought hire purchase agreements. RPG was one of three guarantors of money advanced to Discos, to purchase equipment to be sold on HP, which ended up owing £235,000 in 1992.

When Discos became insolvent RPG claimed the amount owed was to have been offset by deductions for money due to Discos for HP agreements acquired by H&T. Unfortunately no offsets were ever made. Alas for RPG, who claimed the guarantee was legally unenforceable, his co-directors at Lightship had a problem. They told shareholders: "There is not and never was any documentary evidence in support of Mr Galliers-Pratt nor is it practicable for the board to verify the position with the relevant officer of H&T Trade Finance at the time because the company is presently in dispute with him." Lacking the will or resources to litigate, Lightship cancelled the guarantee.

As Lightship began to sink below the waves so RPG discovered the wonders of first the Wild West, aka the Vancouver Stock Exchange, and then the Wild East.

In 1992 the VSE-listed VenTech Healthcare, previously linked to the Beaverbrook family, acquired North West Estates and its British land and properties for shares worth some Can$19 million. This deal gave RPG and his associates control of VenTech, whose only other real interest was a stake in Abbey Healthcare run by Tim Aitken.

VenTech, renamed NWE Capital, soon invested in another Beaverbrook good thing — United Dutch Group. RPG and Beaverbrook are longtime business associates. Beaverbrook was the supposed money and RPG the supposed, er, brain. During 1992 the company purchased a Can$4.165 million stake in United Dutch, which brought Beaverbrook and RPG together with such City luminaries as Jan Bonde Nielsen and Bloomfield, plus shady Italians Florio Fiorini and Giancarlo Parretti (they both went to prison for this or other deals). Within a year the investment was worthless when United Dutch collapsed, as a result of disastrous property deals in Paris and Guyana, forcing Beaverbrook into bankruptcy.

By this time the property interests sold to VenTech were also unhealthy, so it was time for RPG to go east. Enter Peterstar, the long distance telephone company operating in St Petersburg. NWE Capital acquired a 50 percent interest in Peterstar from London businessman Tony Georgiou and his partners in late 1992. The company changed its name to Petersburg Long Distance. Within a year the British property and land interests had been all but written off.

Powered by hopes for the Peterstar deal, shares in PLD rose to $13 by the end of 1993 soon followed by the purchase of a controlling share stake in the company in somewhat mysterious circumstances (detailed in *Eye* 887) by Cable & Wireless. Prior to that deal PLD had paid $30 million to acquire a mobile telephone licence in Kazakhstan — a country in which Bloomfield had developed an interest after a spell hustling timber in Siberia with Bonde Nielsen. Since then the price has moved only lower. Almost $100 million was raised from investors at $6.25 in December 1994 to purchase a bigger stake in Peterstar and a Moscow telephone company. Within a month RPG had exited as executive chairman — a role which had incurred PLD in substantial fees and costs. PLD shares are now just over $5.

Telephones were not the only money making attraction Russia had for RPG and friends. In early 1994 he moved into yet another VSE vehicle, Princess Resources, by the injection of New Baltic Minerals which had a proposed diamond prospect in western Russia. The shares soon rushed up to Can$1.15. But enthusiasm was shortlived. Even talk of a Russian gold mine did not prevent the shares sliding to 16 cents by the end of that year.

But come May 1995 RPG had another crackerjack deal — a gold mine in, of all places, Kazakhstan. Princess shares were suspended at 65 cents on news that it was to acquire a 22 percent interest in the gold mine in partnership with international mining group Placer Dome and the Kazakh government. The price was $15 million cash and 100 million or so Princess shares at 70 cents each. Just who the vendors were of Consolidated Mines of Kazakhstan was no clearer than the vendors of New Baltic Minerals (the now unmentioned diamond prospect) or, come to think of it, the Kazakh mobile licence.

This information became of more than passing interest to Princess shareholders because a supposedly refundable $7.5 million deposit was paid on signing the deal to the vendor. But if the deal did not close, the company had no guarantee of repayment. "There is no assurance that such recovery will be made," the company declared. Obviously the Russian definition of "refundable" loses something in the translation — like $7.5 million.

Princess financed the deal with the aid of none other than S.G. Warburg and a group of institutional backers of RPG including fund managers GFM (also backing Optical Care) who took shares at 50 cents. The shares were soon 68 cents helped by news that Princess was to buy out Placer Dome's interest and that Lonrho was to operate the mine. But then last October disaster struck.

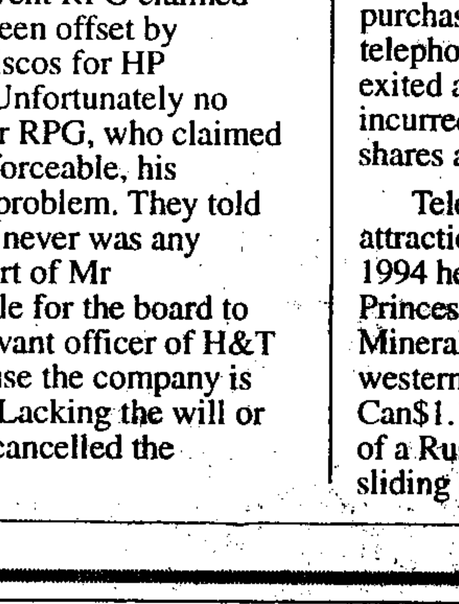
Princess shareholders were informed that the Kazakh deal was off because Placer Dome had terminated the original mining agreement with the local government because due diligence inquiries showed the mine was not viable economically. Princess shares fell to 49 cents. Worse was to come. Placer Dome took legal action to prevent Princess using any of its information to go it alone with the mine. And there matters rest, with Princess shares at 42 cents and the company presumably looking to recover its refundable deposit.

All of which may explain why Galliers-Pratt has decided to move on to new pastures in Eastern Europe looking for more investors who want their eyes testing.

CLEARLY Newspaper Publishing is far braver when it comes to sacking hacks than at annoying government ministers. How else to explain the *Independent on Sunday*'s "revelation" (25 February) that "a senior government minister" had been named in documents submitted for the corruption trial of former tax inspector Michael Allcock. The *Sindie* courageously failed to name the minister. Somewhat surprising as he had been named in *Eye* 891 two weeks before as — Michael Heseltine.

'Slicker'

A WRITER



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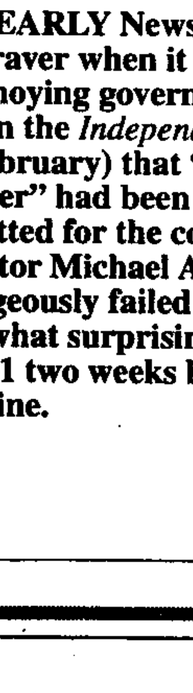

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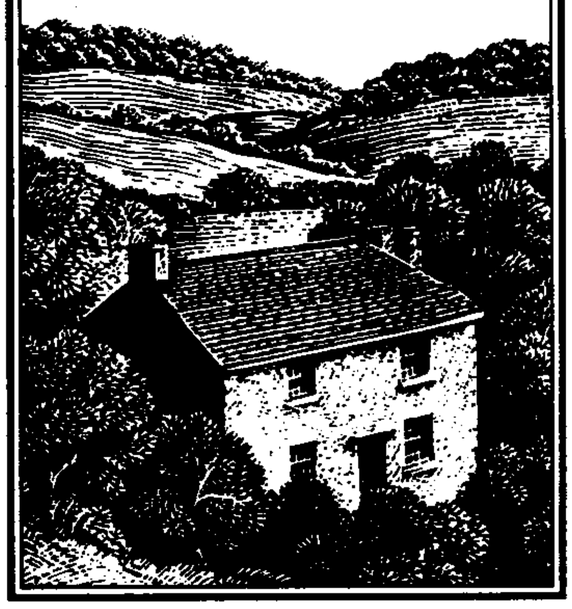

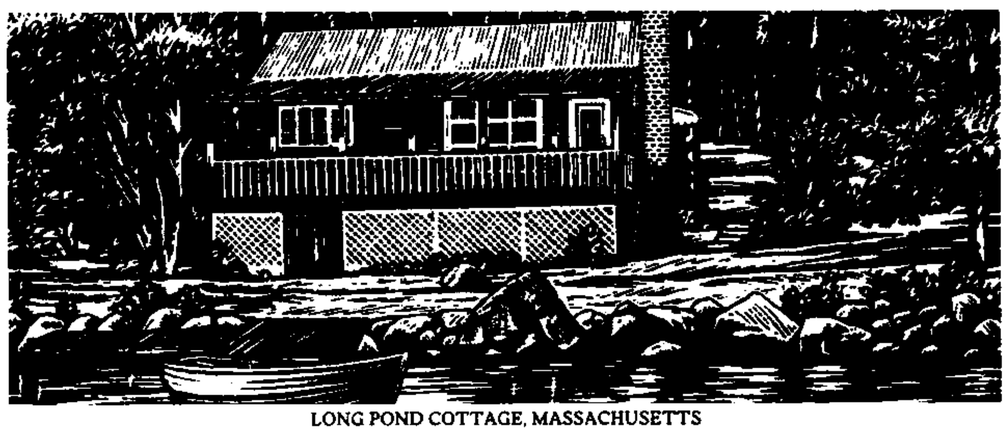

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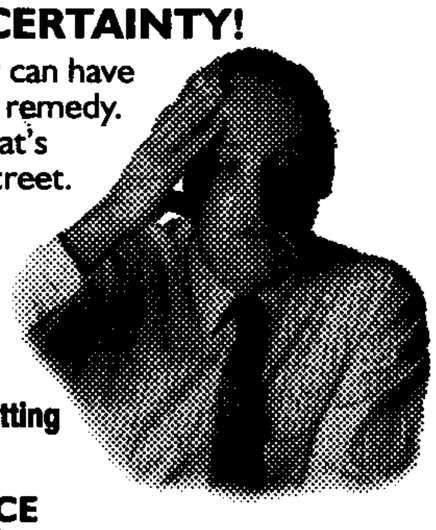

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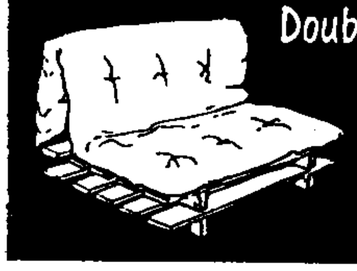

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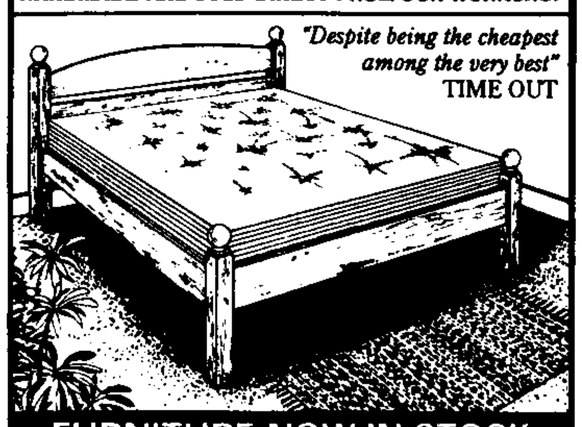

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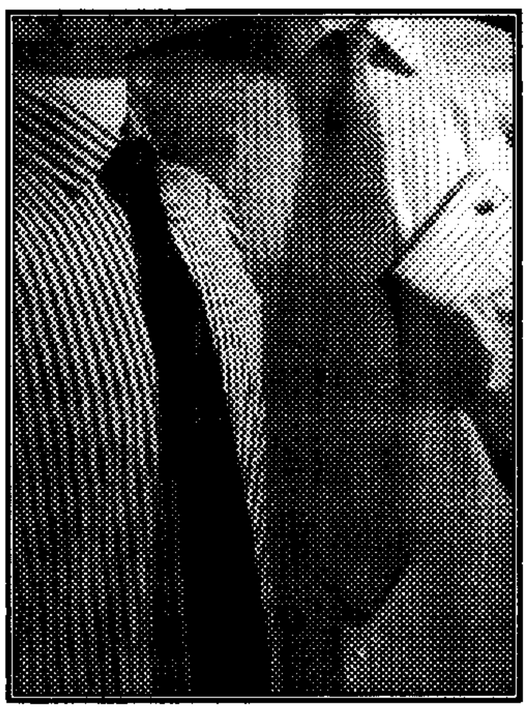

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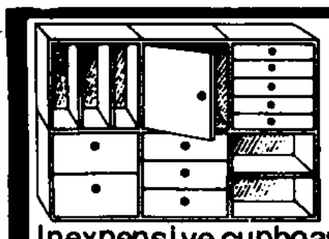

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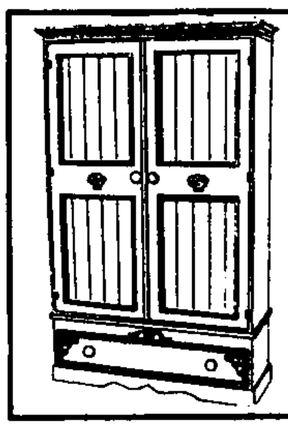

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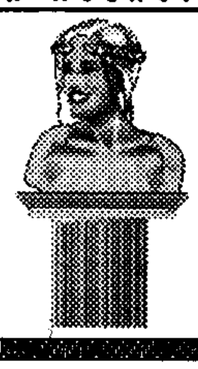

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EXPERIENCED BUTLER/ Chauffeur, 28, seeks permanent post — UK or overseas. Box 0293.

29 YEARS OLD — earning around £38,000 pa — very bored, based North Midlands, will move. Needs new challenge. Would like to get involved in business development or similar. Box 3493.

DOCTOR MARTENS — eight eyelet boots ready and polished! Needy lad needs £500. Anything considered. Box 3593.

AIR-MILES — 01273 689578.

I'LL PAY YOU £1,000 in cash for a Date! Are you famous, have you ever appeared on TV or the stage? To win a large bet I need a male or female celebrity to accompany me to a Company Conference in Hawaii, all expenses paid. Reply with picture to PO Box 164, Manchester M60 3SP as soon as possible.

LOCAL ARTIST would like to hear from fathers and sons willing to be photographed together. Clothed or unclothed. Serious project, so serious replies, please. Your age or appearance unimportant. South of England. Please write Box 0193.

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YOUNG LADIES worldwide seek penpals, friends, lifemates. Free details, photos! HERMES, Box 110660/S, D-10836 Berlin, Germany. Fax 0049 30 2513318.

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COME SKI WITH US! Only 7 places left out of 41 on our fabulous Verbier SWISS CHALET HOLIDAY — 10-17th March. "Leap" at the chance in 1996! DINNER DATES 0181 741 1252.

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VEGETARIAN MATCHMAKERS – 0181 348 5229.

JAPANESE LADIES — loyal, caring, fun, affluent. Also beautiful ladies from Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia would like to meet you. Send large SAE for photos and profiles: ASIA-UK CLUB, 59/60 Derby Square, IM1 3LP I.O.M.

YOUNG INFANTRY officer seeks bright, outgoing female for correspondence and maybe more. Box 6492.

BANISHED TO BOSNIA — male, 39, seeks naughty nymph for correspondence. Meeting on return. Who knows what next! Box 3093.

SENSUOUS, SOPHISTICATED, single white male, 30-48, 5'11"-6'2", good hair, sought by quietly exceptional female, 48, Winchester. Box 1993.

BROKEN-HEARTED MAN, 32, seeks kind, caring lady to be his friend. Box 5692.

MALE DOCTOR, 50, slim, attractive, anglo-indian, lives central London, seeks lively lady, 45 to 60, anywhere. Box 5792.

UNSUCCESSFUL BACHELOR, ageing rapidly (50), seeks London based lady rescuer for friendship and romance (smoker preferred). Box 5892.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 31, unattached, tall, slim, well travelled, bored with current social scene, seeks intelligent female company with SOH. Box 5992.

PRETTY WOMAN, tall, slim, blonde, mid-30s, small child, career, seeks successful businessman, 38-45, kind, humorous, attractive, fun, unattached. London/SE. Box 6092.

VERY ATTRACTIVE American woman, 33, could put that bounce back into your step. Are you an attached (over-45) man, missing that "je ne sais quoi" and wanting a mutually beneficial, not boring, discreet affaire? Hmmmm. Box 6192.

MAKE IT HAPPEN! Wealthy, successful businessman, tall, slim, mid-40s, in celibate marriage, seeks attractive, intelligent, discreet lady for fun, pleasure and happiness in long-term relationship. Let's change our lives. Photo please. Box 1292.

ATTRACTIVE, CARING female, 40, seeks humorous, intelligent male to explore theatre, music, food and finer things of life. Box 1392.

MALE, RECENTLY SINGLED, 40 something, comfortably built, GSOH, seeks lady 30-45 to cuddle and more. Box 1492.

HUMOROUS, FIT, decent, active, professional man, well-travelled, 34, single and not a gargoyle, wltm attractive, slim woman (any race) with wit and warmth. Photo appreciated. Box 1592.

ATTACHED, PROFESSIONAL male, 45, presentable but currently dispirited, seeks warm, attractive lady for discreet romantic dalliances of excitement and mutual uplifting. Thames Valley area. Photo please. Box 1692.

ROMANTIC OLD FART, male early 30s, enjoys outdoor pursuits, music, cafés, comedy. Seeks attractive, fit, intelligent, laidback, non-Tory soulmate. Central/anywhere. Box 1792.

BILIOUS, OVER-EDUCATED, 30something woman, seeks similar man for beer, curry and movies. Box 1892.

ATTRACTIVE MALE (39) seeks happiness with a caring female. Interests: history, philosophy, music. Currently unhappily attached. London/SE. Box 1992.

BERNARD WANTED — Saint or otherwise — by dashing dog-loving divorcee (50s) who would welcome any B 60-75 with soh — ready to rescue her for future fun. (Non-Bs considered.) London/Oxon/Midlands. Box 2092.

BERKS BEAUTY, young 40s, professional, intelligent, Nordic, educated, stylish but adventurous, n/s, missing those spontaneous smiles when waking up in the mornings, looking for tall(ish) matching male with that certain chemistry for remedy, perhaps even permanent cure. Box 3892.

BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA, 27, fit, smart, seeks enlightenment with slim lady (25-35) to attain sexual nirvana. Yorkshire. Box 3992.

CHEERFUL, EDUCATED, Londonian, attractive widow, 40-something, fond of children, animals, countryside, seeks professional gentleman, same age group and outlook. Photo please. Box 4092.

TALL, DIVORCED lecturer (minus beard, B.O.), 48, seeks interesting sensual female 35-55ish. W. Mids. Box 4192.

SINCERE, TALL, caring, slim, attractive, professional guy (young 44), n/s, seeks slim, romantic damsel, 28+, who would never dream of replying to an advert. SOH essential. Photo ensures reply. Box 4292.

MALE GRADUATE, 26, seeks non-materialistic female to distract him from grim realities of working life. Hertfordshire, North London. Box 4392.

TALL, DARK AND handsome 30+++ investment banker, upmarket, Oxbridge educated, exotic origin, attached — seeks gorgeous gal (or similar) for unbridled pursuit of (daytime) hedonistic pleasures. Complete discretion, City/West End (London) preferred. Photo please. Box 6792.

WRY, AMIABLE, affectionate man, 47, Islington, seeks affable, agreeable woman. Box 4492.

SUCCESSFUL, PROFESSIONAL, single male, early forties but never made it past thirty, is looking for an attractive young minded female to be his best friend and hopefully more. Age irrelevant but sense of humour important. Box 4592.

HANDSOME, WEALTHY (but shy) playboy bachelor, 38, nice house, fabulous toys, seeks beautiful, intelligent, country-loving career type girl, 18-34ish, with long silky hair, long slender legs and long red nails; West Midlands/anywhere: Good letter and photo guarantees reply — who knows what 1996 may bring? Box 4692.

ATTRACTIVE MAN, 36, single, is searching for an attractive female for dialectical investigation and more. Box 4792.

SEXY MARRIED MAN, 44, seeking the carnally hungry in the South East. Box 4892.

CAD, 37, SEEKS cadette for mutual improvement. Box 4992.

ACTIVE GENT, 38, seeks married lady, 40-ish, for unsupervised lunches and afternoons. Box 5092.

SAD, HOPELESS CASE, 35, seeks special lady to mother him. Box 5192.

MEET ME WHERE they play the blues. Nice woman (46, divorced) seeks man to laugh with. Oxon/London. Box 5292.

HUMOROUS MALE, 40, caring and carefree, interested and interesting, seeks fair haired, cultured lady to tell him what she likes and thinks. Passion and discretion optional. Box 5392.

GENTLE, INTELLIGENT male, 40, in South West seeks discreet liaison with blonde career/married lady. Box 5492.

WACKY LADY, slim, youngish 40s, solvent, Romanian, English-speaking, no strings, in Transylvanian Alps, wltm unattached Prince Charming. Box 5592.

ENGLISH GUY, 40s, tall, slim, fair-haired company director. If you are naughty but nice — maybe a bored housewife, send me your photo and I'll be glad to buy you a drink. Box 6292.

COMPLETE ANSWER required (for best friend). She's tall, attractive, blonde, 40s, professional, challenging. No rough trade. Reply with photograph. Box 6392.

CAROLINE, 42, stranded in Sheffield seeks Mr Pemberton for love and Ambridge life. Box 6592.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, blonde, professional woman (only doing this once, under pressure from friends) seeks discerning, successful professional man 30-45 for wining, dining, the finer things in life. W/N Yorks area. Photo essential. Box 6692.

LOOKING FOR Richard Gere, age unimportant, wanting petite oriental lady. Box 3592.

PSYCHOLOGIST WOMAN (57) sought to complete research into cautious optimism. Box 3692.

PRETTY PETITE brunette seeks tall, handsome rugby player (under 35) for possible match? Cardiff/Swansea. Photo please. No Groggs! Box 3792.

HANDSOME, SUCCESSFUL, professional male, mid-40s, attached by a very long lead, seeks cheerful lady with equally large libido for no-strings friendship and sensual adventure. Yorkshire/anywhere. Box 6892.

GRADUATE MALE, 30, wltm a sensuous older woman, Yorks/anywhere. Box 6992.

ARTIST, MAN, hopelessly young 46, slim and attractive, seeks likewise lady for fun and inspiration. SE Coast. Box 7092.

KIND, MARRIED MAN, mid-40s, modern outlook, successful, seeks smallish, passionate, caring lady for occasional caring and sharing. London/Home Counties. Box 7192.

WELL-TRAVELLED professional male with diverse tastes in travel, food and sex — seeks attractive, perhaps boyish, woman for no-nonsense nonsense. Box 7892.

MALE, SLIM, affluent, not unattractive, seeks winsome female for wining and dining. Central London. Box 2392.

BOSNIA-BOUND single Army officer, male, 32, gsoh, likes travel, skiing and generally having a good time, seeks correspondence/romance from similar minded attractive female. Box 2492.

LIVELY LONDON LADY, keen skier, art-lover, attractive, good all-rounder, 50s, without hang-ups seeks educated energetic stimulating man to share time and holidays. Box 2592.

ATTRACTIVE MALE, 25, caring, sensitive, ex-model (but not too pretentious), Cambridge student (still not too pretentious, honestly) seeks intelligent, caring female for great conversation, big hugs and happy times. Photo/phone appreciated. London/Cambridge area. Box 2692.

BIBLIOPHILE MALE, 31, London, obsessively fit, vaguely degenerate, seeks (older) woman for Adventurous Times. Box 2792.

MIDLANDS MAN, 41, slim, specs, balding, seeks unattached, large-busted, sensual, sincere lady for lasting relationship. Age unimportant. Box 2892.

INCURABLE (AND) ROMANTIC creative goodlooking man, 50, in Australia for now, will swap cathartic mail with Euro-resident who knows she too has herpes-1, humour, high literacy and low dudgeon. Box 2992.

SATURNINE, NICE, Paul McGann-lookalike, 35, seeks kind, funny, articulate, wanton woman, 28-38. London. Box 3092.

OLD-FASHIONED SWEET girl, 27, seeks successful sweet man to cherish. Box 3192.

KIND, TOLERANT, successful, thirty-something, professional man seeks long-haired lady to share fun, food, friendship, frolics. Photo please! Box 3292.

IT IS A TRUTH universally acknowledged that there are too many Mr Collins' and not enough Darcys. "Lizzie", 37, professional Jewish n/o seeks dashing companion to shake her passion for life, its treasures and challenges. Box 3392.

ARE YOU A BRIGHT, attractive, professional female, 25-34? If so, tall, slim, intelligent male, based London/Dorset, who likes sports, good books and good company wltm you. Box 3492.

NOT A SUPERMODEL? Relax, I'm no Chippendale! Male, 31, n/s, gsoh, into arts, cinema, walks, evenings out, seeks kind, compassionate female, 20s-30s, to share life, love and laughs. Photo appreciated. Box 2192.

MALE UNCUT DIAMOND, 28, still waiting to shine. Likes rock, science, and wit, seeks woman for sparkling relationship. Box 5090.

DIANA HUNTS free tall bright male 40/50s. Box 5390.

UNATTACHED WELL-EDUCATED slim, 6ft, professional man, 44, own teeth, jukebox and large house, seeks sensual woman for caring but uncomplicated fun times. SW London/Surrey. Box 5490.

CONSULTANT, excellent equipment, seeks gorgeous diversionary female. Photo? Box 2493.

TWO UP-MARKET SLAPPERS seek two rich geezers for great nights out in London. Sad, ugly bastards need not apply. Photos please. Box 2693.

BOND GIRL (23/35) required by 007 (39), file/photo exchanged. Box 1193.

VENUS SEEKS ADONIS for theatre, cinema, Irish music (Bristol). Photo please. Box 1293.

"GOD I'M BORED" — attached (sort of), 32 year old, professional, lunatic bloke. Looking for like minded, married, voluptuous, lady, 25-45, for jokes and jollification. North/West, photo/letter reciprocated. Box 1393.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL male, 36, seeks discreet, passionate, female pal (30s) for daytime/weekend meetings in London. Box 1493.

VERY ATTRACTIVE brunette, 32, interests include cinema, sport, eating, drinking and generally enjoying life, seeks special single man (under 40) for possible romance. West Midlands. Box 1593.

TIED PROF. WOMAN, (42), slim, bright, congenial, longs for abandonment in the arms of kind, intelligent man who can make her laugh. Midlands/can travel. Box 1693.

FEMALE DROWNING in boredom seeks charming, educated, fun officer and/or gentleman for resuscitation. Box 1793.

ATTACHED ARCHITECT (43) aspires to affair with absolutely discreet desirable damsel. Tyneside/Teesside. Box 2093.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man, 50, unattached, tall, athletic, into sports, arts, food, wine — seeks similar intelligent, attractive female 35-45 — letter/photo please. Box 2193.

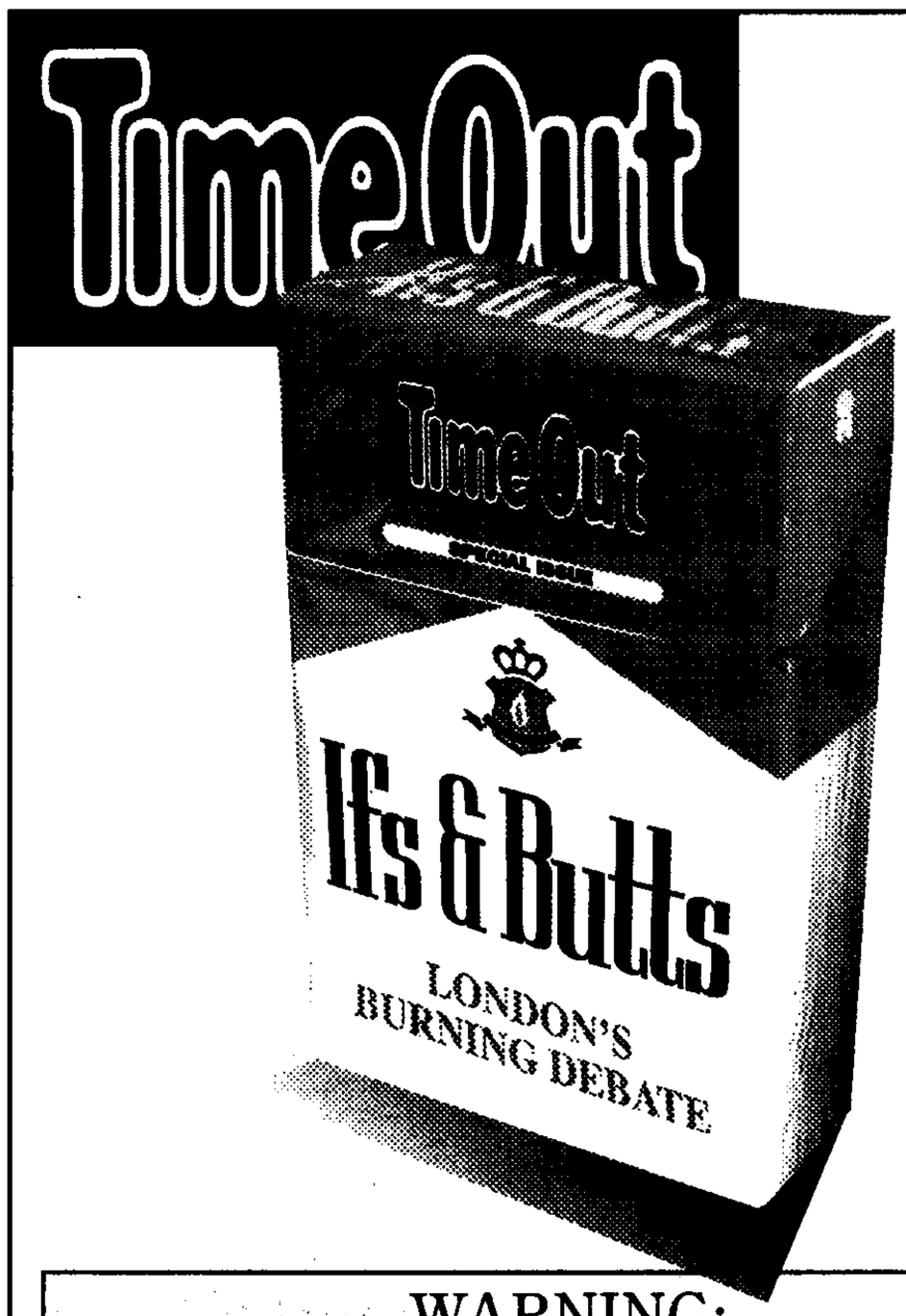
NE MAN, 36, Christian, Green, working class, looking for a warm intelligent woman who appreciates the difference between, and thereby lives her life on the basis of, being as opposed to having. Box 1893.

♥ EYE ♥ PROPOSE

These advertisements arrived too late for our February issue, but it seemed a shame not to include them now!

LINGAM — Yoni says "Yes!"

FLDM — WYMM? ILYMTA. Ches.



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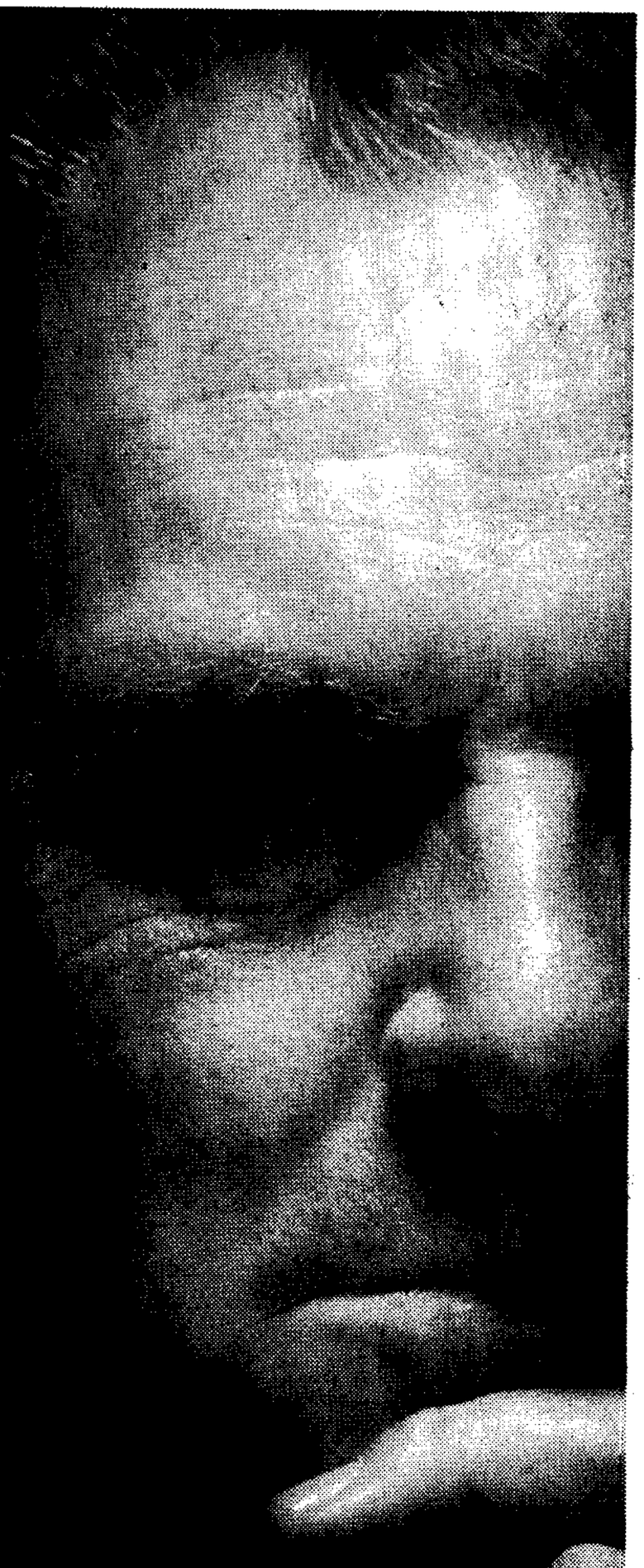

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